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# Business Unusual or Disabling Ambiguity?

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The Mainstreaming of Disabled People in the  
Working for Water Programme

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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## Abstract

The mainstreaming of disability in development programmes is an attractive but elusive goal for the South African state. This research investigates the 'life of policy' that creates the conditions for the targeting of disabled people as participants in Working for Water – a flagship public works programme. Drawing on elements of Frank Fischer's (2003) argumentative policy analysis and governmentality studies, it structures this exploration in three parts. First, it sketched the underpinning rationalities of rule that shape and frame the wider governmental discourses, neoliberalism and social transformation, and examines in some detail their connections to the 'first/second economies' discourse that emerged during Thabo Mbeki's second term in office (2004-08). The Extended Public Works Programme, which provides the legislative home for Working for Water, is then scrutinized. This focuses particularly on tracing its 'articulation' with neoliberal discourses within the wider social security system in order to 'frame' a disabled, marginalised subject in need of integration into the formal economy. Second, five Working for Water Head Office and Western Cape Regional Office staff in charge of the social aspects of the programme were interviewed in order to understand the policy, organisational and practical factors that shape their approach to meeting the programme's disability targets. It finds that there is a powerful but informal 'hierarchy of practice' that favours the environmental and market-driven social aspects of the programme over its disability targets. Third, it investigates three case-study sites, the three SANParks alien vegetation clearing projects that operate in Table Mountain National Park. It found that in the absence of concrete policy or practical guidance from WfW, and faced with a cacophony of other demands, the young project leaders were unable to systematically address disability. The thesis concludes by suggesting that organisational learning processes which are able to critically engage with the conditions and processes that make up the development enterprise are required in order to create the reflexive and flexible conditions necessary for the mainstreaming of disability.

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Things, persons or events always seem to escape those bodies of knowledge that inform governmental programmes, refusing to respond according to the programmatic logic that seeks to govern them... We do not live in a governed world so much as a world traversed by the 'will to govern', fuelled by the constant registration of 'failure', the discrepancy between ambition and the outcome, and the constant injunction to do better next time.

Rose and Miller, 1992: 190 - 1

# 1. Introduction

The South African government and international development organisations have increasingly shown an interest in the ‘mainstreaming’ of disabled people<sup>1</sup> in development initiatives. These initiatives recognise that a disproportionate number of disabled people are poor and unemployed, and so their inclusion in the mainstreaming of development thinking and practice is an important part of the struggle for greater equality and social justice. This research focuses on the experience of mainstreaming the participation of disabled people in Working for Water (WfW), perhaps the most prominent and longest standing public works programme of the democratic dispensation. It is an attempt to understand why, despite clear political will and policy intent, the participation of disabled people remains the only self-set target the programme has been unable to meet. This research journey has been an unusual mixture of battling with the mundane and the personal. It has been about trying to understand the ‘life of policy’ behind and beyond founding documents and glossy reports, and has been about a personal process of grappling with the complexities of translating progressive *intent* into enabling transformative *practice*.

Perhaps unconventionally, but certainly in line the spirit of the ‘positionality’ school, I will begin the introduction of this research with my own narrative, because I am intertwined with the stories I seek to tell through this research. Following Lauren Richardson (2000),

I consider writing as a *method of inquiry*, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic. Although we usually think about writing as a mode of “telling” about the social world, writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of “knowing”—a method of discovery and analysis... Form and content are inseparable (p. 923; original emphasis).

It is important to acknowledge that during the process of writing in “we ‘reword’ the world, erase the computer screen, check the thesaurus, move a paragraph, again and again. This ‘worded world’ never accurately, precisely, completely captures the studied world, yet we persist in trying”

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<sup>1</sup> A note about terminology is both appropriate and important here. The preferred terminology used by the disability movement varies between cultures and countries. The South African government follows the convention ‘people/persons with disabilities’ in line with prominent organisations such as the United Nations. This label has gained greater popularity as it largely arose out of a desire by disability activists for self-ascription and therefore a rejection of labels such as ‘the disabled’ and ‘handicapped’ which had largely been assigned by society and various forms of ‘experts’ (Ngweni, 2006). It was intended to emphasise that *people* with disabilities are not wholly defined by their lack of ability/normality but rather that this should be considered one aspect of their identity. As someone who has relatively recently become a disabled person I have had to wrestle at a very personal level with these labels (as they apply to me and a wider group called ‘disabled people’ of which I am now part). I do not find anything objectionable about the ‘people with disabilities’ argument but I worry that it is a less political, or even apolitical, term that loses much of the politicising thrust of the social model (a concern expressed by Disabled People South Africa, the largest civil society organisations in the country). Influenced by Foucault’s (1982) intentional use of ‘subject’ because of its duality of meaning, I have chosen to use ‘disabled people’ over ‘people with disabilities’ because of the potential of ‘disabled’ in this phrase to represent a verb (to be disabled) as well as an adjective (to have a limitation to one’s ability). It therefore serves (1) to emphasise the political nature of the identity: our marginalisation is a result of *active* discrimination of society and not as a result of bodily or mental ‘abnormality’ (in line with the ‘social model’ of disability - see below), (2) to re-appropriate a previously oppressive label with the intention of ‘leaching’ it of its symbolic capital (influenced primarily by black consciousness and post-structuralist writers), and (3) to address criticisms of the ‘social model’ that its emphasis on the social and institutional factors that make up a large part of the disabled experience sometimes results in a failure to represent the very real experiences of limitation, pain and discomfort caused by biomedical conditions (Parr and Butler, 1999).

(Richardson, 2001: 35). It is therefore vital that we acknowledge to ourselves and our readers that we are involved in and implicated by this process of 'rewording'<sup>2</sup>.

There are two aspects to my personal narrative that shape this research: I broke my neck in a diving accident at the end of my second year at university and my training is in a field referred to generally as 'development studies'. My experience of becoming disabled was one of a sudden schism with my previous self; a sudden and irreversible process in which my body, being, relationships and future were swept away and replaced by uncertainty. I suddenly joined a 'community' which I had largely ignored in my previous life, and whose members and experiences remained scattered and largely hidden. While I could begin to 'find my feet' with many of the other aspects of my life (becoming acquainted with a new body, redefining relationships and redrawing my aspirations for the future), I struggled to find my identity as a 'disabled person'. We live in an able-bodied world, often hostile to those with different needs, and populated by those who define us by our lack. If I was to recognize myself as a disabled person, as I am overwhelmingly recognized by society, I felt I needed to gain a sense of our commonality. What is it that unites us? With what do we fill the space that society (and frequently we) recognize in us (our dis-)? The answer I discovered, when I returned to university and began to read the 'right books', was our common experience of discrimination and alienation driven by society's inability to accommodate our difference. The 'feeling' of being disabled was a kind of righteous anger. This was a feeling I recognized from my time in the field of development studies and having been born in the first generation growing up in post apartheid South Africa – we live in an almost inconceivably unjust world. In 2007, when this research was conceptualised, the field of development studies had backed away from the market fundamentalism that characterised the 1980s (as had the South African state) and, in a modified form in the 1990s, had begun to explore the role of the state in driving change, albeit often in a 'neoliberalised' form. The state, in contrast to the market and civil society, could mobilise significant resources to address the plight of those marginalised groups in society in such a way that would strengthen these other two spheres – the developmental state had been born in South Africa. This research, therefore, creates an opportunity to grapple with issues that were simultaneously both personal and political – the role the state can play in contributing to the positive development of disabled people in South Africa.

In the South African context, with the structuring of our system of governance predicated on the three independent but interconnected spheres of government, age-old questions about how to maintain consistency and control across institutional spaces, usually located in the political sciences or public administration, have become critical for a range of other disciplines. This is because they are so determining of the government's ability to deliver services, spark development and promote and protect the rights of vulnerable groups in society. This research draws on two bodies of literature: work seeking to understand the translation of policy into practice (spanning aspects of policy analysis, implementation studies and governmentality studies), and research on the mainstreaming of disability, particularly in development contexts. The first body of literature has, historically, tended to consist of relatively structuralist and functionalist readings of the policy process – focusing either on poor formulations of policy, incorrect or incomplete implementation of stated policy or the overwhelming power of policy in shaping discourses of engagement – in diagnosing the reasons for policy failure (Winter, 2006; Wagner, 2007; O'Malley et al., 1997). The critiques of these positions that have recently emerged focus, on the one hand, on the *processes* through which policy is formulated and then implemented (paying particular attention to the *methods* of the projection of power through discourse and the norms of institutions) and, on the

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<sup>2</sup> As Gillian Rose has written on the same topic, "[w]e cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it. What we may be able to do is something rather more modest but, perhaps, rather more radical: to inscribe into our research practices some absences and fallibilities while recognizing that the significance of this does not rest entirely in our own hands" (Rose, 1997: 319).

other, making close ethnographic readings of the complex and fraught processes of domination and resistance that occur when policies are enacted in practice (e.g. Li, 1999; Fischer, 2003; Mosse and Lewis, 2006). This research is a contribution to this line of critique – focusing on unpicking the complex dynamics in the net of power-laden discourses shaping the practice of WfW that have resulted in its failure to meet its own policy target with regards to disability.

The second body of literature provides a ‘radical’ reading of disability by arguing against conventional ‘medical model’ conceptualisations of disability, as an obstacle to be overcome by individuals with diagnosable deficiencies, in favour of a ‘social model’ of disability, which emphasises the societal and physical barriers created by a society that is hostile to difference (or deviations from a desired norm) (Parr and Butler, 1999). The emphasis in the social model, therefore, shifts from ‘fixing’ the individual to addressing the wider structural barriers that prevent people with different abilities from participating fully in society. One aspect of this radical reading has been an emphasis on eliminating the barriers to the employment for disabled people in the mainstream of the labour force in a process that has been labelled ‘disability mainstreaming’ (largely modelled on gender mainstreaming) (Dyck, 1999). This has most recently begun to be adopted by the large international development organisations, driven by a recognition that the disabled are a particularly vulnerable and marginalised group in developing contexts (and therefore require specific attention if they are to be beneficiaries) (World Bank, 2003; Yeo and Moore, 2003; Albert, Dube and Riis-Hansen, 2005; Miles, 2006). The recentness of this trend has meant that there is very little literature on the subject, whether the focus is ‘how to’ manuals (for an exception see Harris and Enfield, 2003) or ethnographic research on attempts at such mainstreaming in development contexts (for a call for such research see Yeo and Moore, 2003). This research is a contribution to such literature and begins to outline some of the complexities and contradictions inherent in attempting to achieve such ‘radical’ outcomes within highly bureaucratic institutions. Emerging from both of these literatures, therefore, are a pressing set of questions about how to translate transformative policy *intent* into practice ‘on the ground’ that makes a substantial contribution to improving the quality of life for disabled beneficiaries.

I selected WfW as the site for this research because it has been the government's flagship public works programme since 1995 and, crucially, was one of the first state-led developmental programmes to explicitly target people with disabilities as participants. Noting their continued failure to meet their own disability targets after an organisational review in 2002, the programme launched an initiative called ‘Working on Capability’ to focus on meeting these targets. It was an interest in the outcomes of this initiative that initially attracted me to research the programme – it was a rare example of a mainstream development programme that exhibited a serious intent to find ways to include disabled participants. However, as my interviews with senior staff quickly revealed, this initiative had also had little effect on the numbers of disabled participants being included in the programme. Indeed, it soon became clear that understanding the barriers to their implementation of the programme's stated policy *on disability* would require an understanding of the complex set of interests, discourses and practices that populated the organisation. A technocratic ‘reading’ of the various challenges presented by including disabled participants would risk missing a great deal of the dynamics that result in the difficulties experienced by these types of initiatives. It is only through tracing the interaction between disability-specific factors and the various other features of the organisation that a sketch of the reasons for the continued failure of such initiatives may be outlined. WfW also presented a rare opportunity to examine the diffusion of policy from its initial political processes, through various technocratic and institutional translations and transformations to the factors influencing decision-making by government officials ‘on the ground’. This is because WfW was conceptualised and has been promoted as a partnership between various government departments (although always administratively located within the Department of Water Affairs) with the programme itself responsible for the translation of the wider political/policy intent into specific

programmatic policies, targets, practices and systems. However, these are put into practice, for the most part, by 'implementing agents' which have diverse relationships with the programme – stretching along a continuum of institutions from national bodies such as the South African National Parks (SANParks) down to individual municipalities. I therefore also included a group of three of SANParks' WfW projects within Table Mountain National Park as research sites to investigate the dynamics involved in implementing the programme.

The aim of this research, therefore, is to interrogate why, despite clear political will and policy intent, the participation of disabled people remains the only self-set target the programme has been unable to meet. In order to achieve this it addresses the translation of this intent across the three different levels involved in translating policy into practice:

1. the underlying socio-political context that brings a programme into being and provides it with momentum and structure,
2. the processes involved in translating this into technocratic policies, systems and institutions, and
3. the complex dynamics 'on the ground' involved in balancing the political and institutional demands of these systems with the particularities of the context in which decisions must be made.

As a consequence, the method adopted for the research was a combination of Frank Fischer's (2003) 'argumentative policy analysis' and various development studies that have employed governmentality as an analytical frame but have noted and studied the difference between the *project* of rule and its messy, compromise-ridden nature of practice (Li, 1999; see also, for example, Gupta, 2001; Lewis and Mosse, 2006). Put simply, we need to study both the process involved in the conceptualisation of policy, as this creates the terms upon which interactions take place, as well as its translation into practice, because discourses meet and are engaged by a range of contextually-relevant interests, forces and actors to support a variety of priorities and actions (Cornwall, 2004, Cornwall and Brock, 2005).

In line with Foucault's emphasis on understanding the underpinning 'regimes of practice', this thesis argues that there has been a general 'articulation' (used in Stuart Hall's sense) or conflation between two sets of discourses in the politics and policy of the government since the beginning of Mbeki's second term (2004-2008). On the one hand, the construction of poverty, and the proposal of the Extended Public Works Programme (of which WfW is a flagship project) as a developmental intervention, are shaped by the first/second economy discourse that emerged during this period. This discourse focuses on facilitating the inclusion of poor people from the informal/second economy into the formal economy by providing them with work experience and skills. On the other hand, the construction of the term 'people with disabilities' in government policy and their inclusion in mainstream government programmes (as opposed to specifically targeted programmes) are shaped by discourses about the social model of disability *and* fears that disability grants may breed dependency on the state amongst disabled people that are still able to work. The terms 'poor people' and 'people with disabilities' are constructed in ways that require the same kind of inputs (e.g. skills, training, preparation for the formal market) and impact (e.g. jobs in the formal economy) that have created the opportunity to address both groups with the same kind of interventions. The danger is that the 'differentiated unity' (again, used in Stuart Hall's sense) created by the intersection of these two discourses results in marginalisation of disabled people in the practice of the programme and their effective reduction to a 'disembodied' numerical target. That is to say, the similarities in *intervention* and *outcomes* between these two discourses has resulted in them being 'articulated' in a single programmatic intervention, which has served to obscure the distinct needs of disabled people and lead to their marginalisation *within the programme itself*.

This research argues that the success of the WfW programme has been predicated on its ability to exhibit a mixture of innovation and delivery, pursue and achieve both social and environmental goals, and ambiguously articulate its social goals in such a way that they were able to be connected to the predominant developmental paradigm at the time. It is the peculiarities of these discursive positionings that have given the programme its institutional features and practices, but that have also resulted in the marginalisation of the policy intent to include people with disabilities. This has resulted in the absence of the policy and the lack of institutional clarity required to understand and provide guidance about the complex challenges involved in the inclusion of disabled people.

In practice, based on the case study of the SANParks projects, these ambiguous discourses have resulted in a series of disconnects and silences that have to be resolved in the decision-making of individual managers. These managers respond by interpreting discursive prompts from WfW head office – most often as they are concretised in systems of reporting – weighed against local contextual factors. As the inclusion of disabled people has little presence in the reporting structure of the organisation beyond a numerical target and is not demanded by the communities in which they work, it remains a relatively undemanding ‘empty signifier’ to be filled at the discretion of each manager. The ‘differentiated unity’ constructed by the wider ‘orders of discourse’ (between poverty and ‘people with disabilities’), when combined with the particular dynamics of the programme, depoliticises the inclusion of disabled people because they become ‘just another target’ for project leaders to meet. However, it is also important to emphasise that this analysis implicates *both* the WfW programme’s conceptualisation of ‘poor people’ *and* ‘people with disabilities’ as responsible for their failure to meet their disability targets. As a particularly vulnerable group, problems with the inclusion of disabled people are an expression of general conceptual weaknesses in the programme’s design and implementation, above and beyond the problems particular to disabled people. It is likely that this is why technocratic initiatives to ‘pay more attention to people with disabilities’ are likely to fail – the inclusion of disabled people will continue to act as a weathervane or, to switch metaphors, as a miner’s canary with regards to the conceptualisation and functioning of the WfW programme more generally.

This thesis consists of seven chapters that flesh out the themes, arguments and evidence outlined in this introduction. Chapter 2 outlines the debates within the two sets of ‘framing’ literatures described above: policy/governmentality studies and disability studies with an emphasis on mainstreaming. Drawing on elements from the second chapter, Chapter 3 describes the methodological design for this research – a combination of governmentality and argumentative policy analysis. Chapter 4 traces how the ‘regimes of practice’, particularly in the prevalent first/second economy discourse *and* the government’s ongoing attempts to mainstream disability, have created a ‘differentiated unity’ between poverty and disability.

Chapter 5 provides an empirical account of the dynamics shaping the policy and practices of WfW, focusing on tracing the ways in which ‘the social’ aspects of the programme have been shaped. It argues that the relative marginalisation of disability is both a function of the general discursive currents marking this particular political moment and the way in which the programme has been shaped by its history and those who work in it. Chapter 6 presents three case studies of WfW/SANParks projects, showing how the ambiguities in discourses, policies and institutional culture have impacted on the decision-making of project leaders. It argues that project leaders experience two forms of disconnect – an implicit ‘hierarchy of practice’ that marginalises the inclusionary and developmental aspects of the programme and the near universal difficulty in translating policy into practice which, in these cases, was aggravated by crude monitoring, evaluation and policy tools that further complicate meeting the programme’s disability targets. Chapter 7 draws together the threads from the preceding chapters into a conclusion that argues for

the need for research and nuanced thought about how politicising discourses, such as the social model, may be operationalised into policies, tools and institutional artefacts that support, and even promote, their transformative intent, rather than the apolitical checklists that inspire little more than compliance.

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## 2. Literature review

This chapter will introduce the two primary literatures that inform this research. The first is the constellation of theory and research that focuses on understanding the processes through which the state formulates policy, creates the institutions and tools required to execute it, and the dynamics that result when these are translated by decision-makers into practice 'on the ground'. There are two relatively distinct literatures tackling these questions: on the one hand, policy analysis and implementation studies have a long and diverse history focusing on these questions from a (largely Northern) public administration point of view, while, on the other, governmentality and Gramscian research into questions of governance focus on questions of power during these processes, particularly the complex dynamics between state decision-makers (often tasked as 'developers') and those 'targeted' as 'beneficiaries'. A combination of these two lines of thought – one focused on the process and content of policy formulation, while the other focuses on the dynamics that shape its translation into practice – presents a useful analytical and methodological framework to understand the dynamics at the heart of this research.

The second literature is the activist-inspired reconceptualisation of the notion of disability which focuses on its 'social construction' through the interaction of medical, welfarist and capitalist discourses. This 'social model' seeks to de-pathologise the disabled body by focusing on the social, attitudinal and environmental factors that isolate and marginalise 'impaired' and 'non-normative' body types and functions. The analysis will argue that an emphasis on increasing the number of disabled people entering the workforce has played an important role in this discourse and that this has resulted in an interest in 'disability mainstreaming' as a mechanism to promote the full participation of disabled people in society. It concludes by arguing that this has increasingly been embraced by the welfare reform movement that characterises 'Third Way' neoliberalism (Jolly, 2003; Grover and Piggott, 2005).

### 2.1. Understanding policy and governance

#### 2.1.1. Policy studies: Policy analysis and implementation studies

Policy studies<sup>3</sup> emerged in their earliest form in the new ideas spread during the Enlightenment<sup>4</sup> and the rapidly changing conditions in an urbanising and industrialising Europe (Wagner, 2007). Deep within this response was the "high modernist"<sup>5</sup> conviction that production of empirical knowledge about patterns of human choices and society's ills would allow the creation of theoretical models which would enable sweeping social reforms by administrators (Scott, 1998). As Fischer (2003) traces, it found its current form in the two wars that characterised the Johnson Administration in the United States – the War on Poverty and the Vietnamese war. Both embraced the role of technocrats and were "driven not least by the hope and expectation that, since the general principles were available, only some knowledge gaps needed to be closed by well-targeted empirical research. At

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<sup>3</sup> By which I mean policy analysis and implementation studies.

<sup>4</sup> Particularly coming to grips with the implications of individual liberty and institutions based on the will and welfare of 'the people'.

<sup>5</sup> Scott suggests that "high modernism" is "best conceived as a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws" (Scott, 1998: 4).



the same time, the idea that good knowledge stands in an entirely unproblematic relation to its usefulness was revived" (Wagner, 2007: 37). This was expressed initially in the field's narrow focus on identifying social problems and the formulation of policy, with little attention to processes of implementation or evaluation (deLeon and Vogenbeck, 2006). The subsequent failures of the War on Poverty shifted the focus from policy formulation to questions of implementation and the evaluation of outcomes. The 'implementation studies' that followed tended to be informed by two differing normative positions: 'top down' researchers assumed a 'control orientation' approach (Winter, 2006), which emphasised the centralisation of control, a split between the political process and its execution by administrators, and a tight focus on factors within the control of policymakers. It therefore sought to apply an empirical, causal theory approach which would allow for the generation, testing and weighting of the variables affecting the implementation process (Fischer, 2003).

In contrast, 'bottom-up' researchers focused on the interface between the public sector and its citizens, claiming that by studying the decision-making by 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipskey, 1980) and the influence of local, contextual variables, they were better able to capture the range of policy implementation issues (Winter, 2006). In this approach implementation was "regarded as an integral and continuing part of the political policy process rather than an administrative follow-on, and seen as a policy-action dialectic involving negotiation and bargaining" (Barrett, 2004: 253). These researchers argued that because of this 'policy-action dialectic' the discretion granted to local officials was positive as it resulted in far more nuanced, locally relevant solutions that were negotiated between a range of actors. The essential differences in 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspectives were captured by O'Toole (2004: 314): "Is implementation primarily a matter of assembling action in support of intentions and orders of political leaders? Or of mobilising the energies of disparate stakeholders to make sensible choices in congealing problem-solving around a complex, context-specific, and dynamic policy issue? Does the practical question essentially focus on issues of compliance and monitoring? Or of innovation, collaboration, and creativity?"

Despite these differences, a common element still shared by the mainstream of policy analysis and implementation studies is a focus on contributing to 'rational decision-making'.

Rational decision-making is seen to follow steps that closely paralleled the methods of scientific research. Decision-makers first identify empirically the existence of a problem, then formulate the goals and the objectives that would lead to an optimal solution. After determining the relevant consequences and probabilities of alternative means to the solution, they assign a numerical value to each costs and benefits associated with the consequences. Combining the information about consequences, probabilities, and costs and benefits, they select the most efficient and effective alternative. Basic to the method has been an effort to sidestep partisan goal and value conflicts generally associated with policy issues. Policy analysis, in this model, strives to translate political and social issues into technically defined ends to be pursued through administrative means (Fisher, 2003: 4-5).

Many of the techniques developed by policy analysts and implementation researchers in the positivist, rationalist school remain influential and widely used to inform policy work (e.g. rational choice theory, cost benefit analysis, model building and linear programming). There has, however, been growing recognition of the limitations of these techniques and they are increasingly being used in conjunction with qualitative or deliberative techniques (deLeon and Vogenbeck, 2007).

Some practitioners and theorists have responded to the continued limitations of the rationalist school by explicitly addressing and critiquing the positivist dimensions underpinning these debates. Central to their critique was that the positivist quest to produce predictive models (even those that

included institutions and ideas) created an illusionary separation between facts and values (House and Howe, 1999). Instead, they argued that the facts that lie at the heart of policy making are not empirical 'truths' but rather social constructions that intermingle empirical findings with wider social meanings and ideological positions.

The meaning of the 'facts' to the political actors is determined by political discourses and these meanings are what the political struggle is first and foremost about. The social problems that enter the policy process are thus social constructions built on an intermingling of empirical findings with social meanings and ideological orientations. To understand how a particular condition becomes constructed as a problem, the range of social constructions in the discourses and texts about it need to be explored in the situational context from which they are observed. Furthermore, problems and the policies designed to deal with social problems are important determinants of which actors will have the authority empowered to deal with the issues they raise (Fischer, 2006: 62).

At the heart of policy (and politics), therefore, is the struggle over meaning – most particularly how problems are 'framed' and then proposed to be solved. It begins with the delineation of a 'target population' that requires some form of intervention. Schneider and Ingram (1993:334) argue that "these characterizations are normative and evaluative, portraying groups in positive or negative terms through symbolic language, metaphors, and stories" However, these constructions do not simply live in policy, they have active effect on these target populations: "Social constructions become embedded in policy as messages that are absorbed by citizens and affect their orientations and participation patterns" (*ibid*). This constructionist argument does not imply that conflicts over meaning are merely theoretical – they shape all subsequent activity. The implications of this insight were explored in detail by Schoen and Rein (1994) in their influential work *Frame Reflection*, which argued that public policies rest on frames that provide an underlying structure of beliefs, perceptions, prejudices and appreciations. These frames determine what actors will consider as legitimate facts about an issue, how to consolidate these into a perceived problem and direct them to normative prescriptions for action. For example, they argue that "[s]omeone cannot simply say... 'Let us compare different perspectives for dealing with poverty', because each framing of the issue of poverty is likely to select and name different features of the problematic situation. We are no longer able to say we are comparing different perspectives on 'the same problem,' because the problem itself has changed" (Schoen and Rein, 1994:153-4). This approach has been taken up by researchers who have sought to apply a narrative theory approach to policy analysis. Narratives enable us to process and make sense of disparate information by placing them within a familiar structure – a beginning, middle and conclusion. Fischer (2003:161) argues that "narrative analysis is most closely aligned with problem definition and problem setting, arguably the most crucial step in analytic process. Such research has made clear not only the subjective and conflictual character of problem definition, but even more specifically the key role of language and narrative stories in the negotiation of such definitions".

While there are many aspects to narrative or constructionist policy analysis, I would like to focus on two particular aspects: the utility of ambiguity in policy discourse and its role in creating discourse coalitions. Fischer (2003) points out that legislatures often seek to satisfy demands from multiple stakeholder groups by formulating vague and ambiguous statutes:

Seeking to satisfy different interest groups at the same time, government policies often comprise a sequence of ambiguous claims and actions that contain logical inconsistencies. Given the would-be irrationality of the process, policy scientists have devoted a good deal of energy to developing strategies for circumventing this inconvenient aspect of political reality. What they have generally missed, however, is the degree to which such work enables conflicting groups to find ways to live with their differences. By helping to bring together citizens with varying policy preferences, ambiguity often facilitates cooperation

and compromise. Enabling politicians to blur or hide problematic implications of controversial decisions, ambiguity can assist in sidestepping barriers that otherwise block consensus building. People who benefit from the same policy but for different reasons can more easily find ways to agree (Fischer, 2003: 63).

Ambiguity, then, can enable people with different value commitments to come together and build potentially unusual political coalitions. For example, using his research on acid rain, Hajer (1995) showed that ‘discourse coalitions’ based on the shared usage of a set of storylines were most effective when they were ‘multi-interpretable’. ‘The facts’ did not get in the way of the coalitions because they were inherently ambiguous – they were interpreted and mobilised by different narratives for differing ends<sup>66</sup>. Seeking a way to synthesise the broad literature on implementation studies, Matland (1995) proposed a ‘contingency theory’ based on two primary factors – the degree of ambiguity in the policy and the level of conflict. This produced an ambiguity/conflict matrix that describes four different types of policy implementation (Figure 1).

		CONFLICT	
		Low	High
AMBIGUITY	Low	<p><i>Administrative Implementation</i></p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Example: Smallpox eradication</p>	<p><i>Political Implementation</i></p> <p>Power</p> <p>Example: Busing</p>
	High	<p><i>Experimental Implementation</i></p> <p>Contextual Conditions</p> <p>Example: Headstart</p>	<p><i>Symbolic Implementation</i></p> <p>Coalition Strength</p> <p>Example: Community action agencies</p>

Figure 1: Ambiguity-Conflict Matrix: Policy Implementation Processes (Matland, 1995: 160)

Each box indicates the type of implementation process, the core principle that determines the outcome of this type of implementation and an example of the kind of policy that represent this type of process. In this thesis I will focus on the two policy implementation processes that are characterised by high ambiguity – Matland’s experimental implementation and symbolic implementation – because, as I argue in subsequent chapters, it is in the differences between these processes that we can begin to trace the roots of the failure to mainstream disability in WfW. As Fischer (2003) points out above, processes of policy formulation tend towards ambiguity because they enable the smooth political processing of the outlines, and possibly the institutionalisation, of a programme. When they enter the implementation process, however, coalitions can be placed under

<sup>66</sup> “Numbers,” the bedrock of the ‘hard facts’ of empirical positivism, “in politics are measures of human activities, made by human beings, and intended to influence human behaviour. They are subject to conscious and unconscious manipulation by the people being measured, the people making the measurements, and the people who interpret and use measures made by others” (Stone, 1997: 167).

strain if the policies create conflict. Matland (1995:167) explains that in experimental implementation<sup>7</sup> “many policies and goals are agreed upon and known, yet the means of reaching these goals is unknown. Implementing policies of this type can be technology-forcing and can lead to the development of entirely new capabilities”. It is precisely the high level of ambiguity in the programme that creates the opportunity for real innovation and, as a consequence, an organisational emphasis should be placed on evaluation and feedback, rather than compliance and monitoring systems<sup>8</sup>. In contrast, policies which include highly salient symbols with little understanding of how they may be achieved or incorporated, can lead to increased levels of conflict:

For policy with only a referential goal, differing perspectives will develop as to how to translate the abstract goal into instrumental actions. The inherent ambiguity leads to a proliferation of interpretations. Competition ensues over the correct "vision." Actors see their interests tied to a specific policy definition, and therefore similar competing coalitions are likely to form at differing sites. The strength of these actors will vary across the possible sites... Outcomes are bounded and less differentiated than for cases of experimental implementation, because opposition coalitions are able to put effective limits on policy even when they cannot determine its content. Nevertheless substantial variation is expected, with coalition strength at the local level being of central importance in determining the policy outcome (Matland, 1995: 168-9).

The ambiguity, then, feeds a diversity of interpretations that results in narrow, locally (over-) determined outcomes based on particular power configurations. To foreshadow the argument in later chapters, this research has found that the success of WfW was predicated on its experimental implementation model. However, its disability targets, because they demanded additional resource investment, have become an example of symbolic implementation. The success or failure of particular projects to meet their disability targets has been determined by their discursive positioning with regard to a range of other factors within the organisation.

This brings us to Fisher's (2003) argument that narrative theory is insufficient to understand this level of detail about the outcomes of the implementation process. Adopting an explicitly post-positivist approach, he suggests that narratives and arguments have been conflated and that the role of the policy analyst is to identify the ways in which the *argument* has been embedded in the story. A narrative connects various elements into a plot that describes 'what is', whereas an argument is designed to lead as to conclusions - what 'ought' to be (Fischer, 2003: 181). But this does not simply mean mapping the structure of the argument; it requires a focus on the normative dimensions (the 'rules of the discourse') that help shape its conclusions. These rules cannot be analysed in the abstract, he argues, but rather need to be understood as 'practical reason' or 'reasoning-in-context' in which agents are required to accept, resist or adapt the norms implied in a discourse (*ibid*: 181). The test of whether an argument is 'practical' is the extent to which it can establish that particular acts are desirable and should have been performed. He suggests that the goal of analysis "is to improve policy argumentation by illuminating contentious questions, identifying the strengths and limitations of supporting evidence, and elucidating the political implications for contending positions. In the process, the task is to increase communicative competencies, deliberative capacities, and social learning" (*ibid*: 201-2). The role of the researcher or

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<sup>7</sup> He argues that "this type of implementation condition closely parallels a "garbage can" process with streams of actors, problems, solutions, and choice opportunities combining to produce outcomes that are hard to predict. The conditions that are required for a choice opportunity to develop into a garbage can are problematic preferences (ambiguous goals); uncertain technology (no predefined correct behavior); and fluid participation (actors vary over time)" (Matland, 1995: 167).

<sup>8</sup> While he would not put it in these terms, a key task of these internal systems is to build a common, nuanced metanarrative that is able to inform and strengthen participation and 'buy in' into the programme (thereby further reducing conflict and increase shared innovation).

analyst, therefore, is as an engaged and dynamic actor attempting to spark informed discourse between the various stakeholders implicated in the policy process:

After organising a policy argument into its component parts, the analyst can turn his or her attention to political consensus formation... the process involves an attempt to convert a static conception of a policy position into a dynamic argument with persuasive power. After identifying the possible areas of policy consensus and conflict, the analyst can design an alternative policy proposal that addresses the key issues of conflict... The development of such policy proposals must remain as much an art as a science. The process involves conjecture and speculation, analogy, and metaphor, and logical extrapolation from established causal relationships and facts. Unlike the scientist's analysis based on a closed, generalised model, the policy analyst's proposal has to be open and contextual (Fischer, 2003: 198).

There is, however, one continuing (somewhat unchallenged) normative dimension to Fischer's work. As O'Toole (2004:312) points out, a focus on improving implementation "carries a normative twist", irrespective of the approach adopted, because it presupposes a positive and/or benevolent state. Fischer ultimately aims to democratise policy deliberation by "creat[ing] political spaces for democratic participation that *offer a place for reason* in both goal-setting and conflict management. Asking who is privileged and who is marginalised by the established forms of governance, such policy analysis challenges the formal policy institutions to be democratic and collaborative" (Fischer, 2003: 236-7; added emphasis). This view of the state, and Fischer's faith in rational deliberation (even when informed by awareness of power relations), does not seem to go far enough in recognising the role that the wider 'balance of forces' in society plays in structuring the emergence of alternative possibilities. These 'rationalities of rule' underpin the very *raison d'être* of the state.

### 2.1.2. Governmentality

Michel Foucault's (1975, 1977, 1982, 1991a, 2003) work sought to understand the Enlightenment project's search for forms of 'truth' and 'rationality' about the human subject from a position that recognised its daunting impossibility. The quest for truth and rationality have become intertwined with the 'will to govern' and forms the substrate of the modern age's microphysics of power – the dance of domination, resistance and endless slippage that is involved in "scientification" and disciplining of the social world – and which therefore represented a prime site for his analysis. In lectures between 1975-1979, Foucault argued that the disciplinary power he had thus far described in his work, seen in institutions such as prisons, was later supplanted by bio-politics and security (Foucault, 2003). He introduced the beginnings of a cognitive schema which was concerned with "provid[ing] a language and a framework for thinking about the linkages between questions of government, authority and politics, and questions of identity, self and person" which he was to call governmentality<sup>9</sup> (Dean, 1999: 13). The governmentalised state has its roots in the development of new forms of 'statistical' knowledge in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century but was consolidated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a focus on the population within a particular territory, in contrast with the traditional focus on territoriality. The goal of 'good government' was no longer simply the exercise of authority over the people within a territory, or the ability to discipline and regulate them, but to foster their prosperity

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<sup>9</sup> It therefore drew together and refined much of his previous work including (1) the productivity of power; in this case the state's concern with the health and welfare of its citizens, (2) the constitution of subjectivity through power relations; exemplified by processes in which individuals render themselves 'subject to' and 'subjects of' (i.e. actors within) particular forms of knowledge and thereby monitoring and correcting 'transgressing' behaviour, (3) the multiplicity and contingent nature of relations of power, and (4) the immutability of forms of resistance and struggle wherever power is exercised (Rose-Redwood, 2006).

and happiness. "Accordingly, the governmental state arose from the governmentalization of the state rather than the statization of society and was based on continual (re)definition of state competences and the division between public and private" (Jessop, 2006: 38). The rise of the modern state, therefore, is closely connected to the emergence of the human sciences and technical forms of knowledge about 'the population', both as individual subjects and has a totality (Foucault, 1991a; Lemke, 2001). As an analytic frame "governmentality calls for a far more precise diagnosis of the rationalities of rule, the forms of knowledge and expertise they construct, and the specific and contingent assemblages of practices, materials, agents and techniques through which these rationalities operate to produce governable subjects" (Hart, 2004: 92).

Interest in governmentality has grown rapidly in the last few years in development studies because it is perceived to account for and represent the extremely complex interaction of local and global forces in governmental and non-governmental development efforts in postcolonial, neoliberal, globalised settings (see Hart, 2002). Some of the initial work focused somewhat narrowly on describing the development apparatus and how it constructs and orders the reality in which it seeks to intervene (Ferguson, 1990; Escobar, 1995). However, this work has been critiqued because development discourse is conceptualised as a singular, all-powerful force, while the 'Third World' and individuals are granted very little agency (Nederveen Pieterse, 2000; Nustad, 2001; Ziai, 2004). The argument is that the distance of these studies from the messiness of implementation results in their inability to account for the constitutive role of contestation in the development process and "ritualised and repetitive accounts of 'governing' in increasingly diverse contexts" (O'Malley, Weir and Shearing, 1997: 514). A second generation of governmentality-inspired development studies research, which seeks to explore messiness of implementation, has made an invaluable contribution to understanding the operation of government and governance more generally (e.g. Li, 1999, 2005; Moore, 2000; Gupta, 2001; Cornwall, 2004; Masaki, 2004, 2006; Corbridge *et al.*, 2005; Mosse and Lewis, 2006). Gupta (2001:69) reminds us that "if we don't take governmentality to be a system that was set in place once and for all in the Enlightenment, but as an ever-renewing and ever-deepening process, then we have to consider how governmentality is itself a conjunctural and crisis-ridden enterprise, how it engenders its own modes of resistance, and makes, meets, molds, or is contested by new subjects".

In an influential analysis of ethnographic research from Indonesia, Li (1999) argues that it is less important for plans and discourses to 'succeed' than it is that they *provide a basis from which different parties can engage*, and thereby achieve some form of negotiated compromise. She suggests that the act of governing relies on 'culturally informed action' and the project of rule, therefore, is characterised by a process of compromise (on the basis of common 'cultural framings') rather than the dichotomies of domination and resistance. Based on this analysis, she argues for the need to distinguish between development (and the processes of governmentality) as a *project* of rule from its messy, and often precarious, accomplishment in practice.

To appreciate [how rule is accomplished], one needs to understand the cultural framings embedded in the ethnographic details: how objects of planning are defined, selected, and arrayed; the forms of interaction between officials and those they would constitute as clients; the approach taken to deviations from the plan; whether "the rules" are vigorously enforced or generously, paternalistically ignored to better enmesh, indeed to *compromise*, the objects of planning. These should be considered, moreover, not as exceptions or oversights but as part of how rule is accomplished. By this I do not mean to suggest that compromise is planned or preconfigured in the plan, engineered by an omniscient and very subtle state for the purpose of rule. Its consequences for rule are, instead, the unintended outcome of culturally informed action, the result of people's intimate knowledge of their own state system, which includes the knowledge of "how to go on" in a variety of contexts, including when up against a problematic plan or rule (Li, 1999: 314-5; original emphasis).

In a provocative piece echoing much of this work, entitled in part *Is Good Policy Unimplementable?*, David Mosse (2004) argues that ‘success’ and ‘failure’ are policy-orientated judgements that obscure the actual effects of development interventions. He argues that the role of policy discourse in development is to generate

mobilizing metaphors (‘participation’, ‘partnership’, ‘governance’, ‘social capital’) whose vagueness, ambiguity and lack of conceptual precision is required to conceal ideological differences, to allow compromise and the enrolment of different interests, to build coalitions, to distribute agency and to multiply criteria of success within project systems. But, secondly, ideas that make for ‘good policy’ — policy which legitimizes and mobilizes political and practical support — are not those which provide good guides to action. Good policy is unimplementable; it is metaphor not management (although ‘management’ is perhaps the most important development metaphor of all). Or, rather than ‘unimplementable’, we should say that policy goals come into contradiction with other institutional or ‘system goals’ such that policy models are poor guides to understanding the practices, events and effects of development actors, which are shaped by the relationships and interests and cultures of specific organizational settings (Mosse, 2004: 663).

These arguments, then, bring us to a very similar conclusion to Fischer's (2003) work, presented above. However, each body of work — policy studies and governmentality studies — contains particular strengths and weaknesses, highlighting some aspects of these processes, while paying less attention to others. Happily for our purposes, these strengths and weaknesses offset one another well: the strength of one is the weakness of the other and vice versa. Despite stressing the importance of the wider systems of power and discourses that shaped policy, Fischer's strength is the framework he provides to understand the ‘middle life’ of policy, from formulation to neo-institutional analysis. Governmentality, on the other hand, helps us understand the influence of wider discourses and societal dynamics, the underlying ‘rationalities of rule’, and draws our attention to the ‘microphysics of power’. These will be outlined in greater detail in the Chapter 3.

### **2.1.3. Finding an analytical language**

Given the array of analytical languages presented thus far, it is useful to the specific and deliberative about a few central analytical terms that will be used to describe the processes outlined above. This section introduces two terms that will be employed in the analytical chapters: articulation and friction.

Articulation<sup>10</sup> is drawn from the work of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall in his attempts to understand the complex ways in which discourses circulate through society and interact with one another with the result of reinforcing an overall hegemony<sup>11</sup>. For him, while there is certainly a deep

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<sup>10</sup> Similar but distinct notions have been proposed by other theorists, for example Fairclough's (1995) ‘orders of discourse’ or Laclau's (1996) ‘chains of equivalence’.

<sup>11</sup> Hall was very aware of Foucault's work but was wary of the ‘disciplinary’ formulation of power he used in his early work. He explains that “[i]f Foucault is to prevent the regime of truth from collapsing into a synonym for the dominant ideology, he has to recognize that there are different regimes of truth in the social formation. And these are not simply ‘plural’ — they define an ideological field of force... In other words, as soon as you begin to look at a discursive formation, not just as a single discipline but as a formation, you have to talk about the relations of power which structure the inter-discursivity, or the intertextuality, of the field of knowledge. I don't much care whether you call it ideology or not. What matters is not the terminology but the conceptualization. The question of the relative power and distribution of different regimes of truth in the social formation at any one time-which have certain effects for the maintenance of power in the social order —

relationship between the discursive formations present in society and its underlying economic structures, the 'superstructure' cannot simply be 'read off' the underlying modes of production. He notes that different discourses can interact to reinforce certain power dynamics – for instance race and class in South Africa – but emphasises that there is no necessary or, put another way, fixed relationship between these two discourses (Hall, 1980). In this regard the word 'articulation' has a useful double meaning in English: it means both to express, to speak, the 'language-ing' of social relationships as well as the connection between different things, i.e. an 'articulated' lorry consists of a cab and trailer that may be, but are not necessarily, connected to one another (Grossberg and Hall, 1996). They explain further:

So the so-called "unity" of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary "belongingness". The "unity" which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected. Thus, a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects. Let me put that the other way: the theory of articulation asks how an ideology discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it; it enables us to think how an ideology empowers people, enabling them to begin to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation, without reducing those forms of intelligibility to their socio-economic or class location or social position (Grossberg and Hall, 1996: 141).

Elsewhere Hall (2003) emphasises that in an analysis "of any phenomenon or relation, we must comprehend *both* its internal structure – what it is in its differentiatedness as well as those other structures to which it is coupled and with which it forms some more inclusive totality. Both the specificities and the connections – the complex unities of structures – have to be demonstrated by the concrete analysis of concrete relations and conjunctions" (p. 128). This, then, is the challenge for analysing the 'rationalities of rule' that bring about and shape a particular programme – it is about identifying the articulation between different ideological elements and discourses that result in the "differentiated unity" (Hall, 2003: 127) required to make the programme and its policies politically and socially coherent and attractive. The 'theory of articulation' enables us to explain why "competing ideologies [can] coexist within the same discourse; despite the apparent uniformity of today's development consensus, different actors invest key terms like poverty reduction, empowerment and participation with a range of different meanings" (Cornwall and Brock, 2005: 1046). The ambiguity in policy formulation and implementation, highlighted in the previous chapter, is useful in building political support because it enables the articulation of varied ideological elements and discourses in a single 'unity'. The notion of ambiguity, then, provides us with a robust analytic tool to understand the dynamics as different discourses interact to form the particular rationalities of rule that inform the processes of governmentality.

The second term outlined here is 'friction' which is drawn from Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's (2004) *Friction: an Ethnography of Global Connection*. She argues there has been a deep division amongst

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that is what I call 'the ideological effect'. So I go on using the term 'ideology' because it forces me to continue thinking about that problem" (Grossberg and Hall, 1996: 48-9). The particular terms employed, therefore, were less of an issue for him than a proper acknowledgement that the 'relations of power' in a social order shape the fields of knowledge, 'discursive formations', in ways that preserve their power. A fine reading of Foucault's work, I believe, would find that he comes to the same conclusion. The methodological advantage of Hall, however, is twofold: the deep awareness he brings to the analysis of the role that the underlying economic forces play in shaping discursive formations, and his insistence on recognising the continued differentness of the discursive 'strands' that combine in discursive formations (see below).



leftist scholars about how to describe post-Cold War capitalism: humanities scholars describing the universalising quality of capitalism and proposing the mobilisation of universal in opposition, while social scientists, particularly ethnographers, have focus on unevenness and specificity of capitalism and emphasise the importance of place-based struggles. Neither of these groups, however, “pause to consider how universals work in a practical sense. To move beyond this it is important to see generalization to the universal as an aspiration, an always unfinished achievement, rather than the confirmation of a pre-formed law. Then it is possible to notice that universal aspirations must travel across distances and differences, and we can take this travel as an ethnographic object” (Tsing, 2004: 7). This recalls Gupta’s (2001) insistence, quoted in the previous chapter, that we think about governmentality not as a monolithic, all-powerful entity that found its final form during the Enlightenment, but rather as a contested and continually renewing project of rule. While this thesis will employ the notion of friction in a slightly different way to Tsing, it provides an invaluable way to speak about the dynamics that occur when universals (the disabled, mainstreaming, empowerment), which lie at the heart of all policies, interact with people and conditions ‘on the ground’. Tsing (2004) emphasises the following about the term ‘friction’:

Speaking of friction is a reminder of the importance of interaction in defining movement, cultural form, and agency. Friction is not just about slowing things down. Friction is required to keep global power in motion. It shows us (as one advertising jingle put it) where the rubber meets the road. Roads are a good image for conceptualizing how friction works: Roads create pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go. The ease of travel they facilitate is also a structure of confinement. Friction inflects historical trajectories, enabling, excluding, and particularizing. The effects of encounters across difference can be compromising or empowering. Friction is not a synonym for resistance. Hegemony is made as well as unmade with friction (Tsing, 2004: 6).

This, then, echoes Li (1999) finding that the efficacy of governmentality is dependent on its compromise. “Engaged universals travel across difference and are charged and changed by their travels. Through friction, universals become practically effective. Yet they can never fulfil their promises of universality. Even in transcending localities, they don’t take over the world. They are limited by the practical necessity of mobilizing adherents. Engaged universals must convince us to pay attention to them. *All* universals are engaged when considered as practical projects accomplished in a heterogeneous world” (*op cit*: 8; original emphasis). The concept ‘friction’ therefore gives us the language with which to describe the processes of policy implementation (and governmentality) as they are translated into, and ‘rub against’, different institutions and systems of practice.

## 2.2. Mainstreaming Disability

This was the explanation I had sought for years. Suddenly what I had always known, deep down, was confirmed. It wasn’t my body that was responsible for all my difficulties, it was external factors, the barriers constructed by the society in which I live. I was being disabled – my capacities and opportunities were being restricted – by prejudice, discrimination, inaccessible environments and inadequate support. Even more important, if all the problems had been created by society, then surely society could uncreate them. Revolutionary! (Crow, in Butler and Bowlby, 1997: 413).

The history of writing about and professional engagement with disability is complex and diverse but two distinct themes are visible: researchers, healthcare professionals and charities focused on mitigating the worst effects of imperfect and malfunctioning bodies and minds, and researchers, activists; and reformers (including some healthcare professionals) that focus on addressing the

social, environmental and economic boundaries that prevent the full participation of 'non-normal' bodies in society. In the literature these are conventionally referred to as the medical and social models of disability (Parr and Butler, 1999; Tregaskis, 2002; Yeo and Moore, 2003; Watermeyer and Swartz, 2006). (Western) common sense notions have long understood disability as a static fact about an individual who, due to an impairment or biological difference, experiences some form of 'handicap'. The social sciences and medical professions, therefore, spent much of the (late) nineteenth and twentieth centuries addressing these 'individual medical traged[ies]' (Shakespeare, 1993) by either trying to correct the impairment or assist the individual in 'coming to terms' with their less productive (and less valued) life (Priestley, 2006). For example, in *The Birth of the Clinic: an Archaeology of Medical Perception*, Foucault argues that with the advent of modernity, the articulation of bodily differences shifted from entries in a catalogue of biological diversity (which characterised a mediaeval approach to the study of nature) to an objectifying taxonomy of deviance. "[Diagnosis] gave the clinical field a new structure in which the individual in question was not so much a sick person as the endlessly reproductive pathological fact to be found in all patients suffering in a similar way" (Foucault, 1975: 97). As recently as the International Year of Disabled People in 1981, the dominant way of addressing disability and was through medical knowledge and a focus on rehabilitation (as captured in the World Health Organization's guiding document at that time – the International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap) (Priestley, 2006).

Beginning in the 1970s, however, disability activists began to formulate a 'social model' of disability, led by a small British organisation called the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). Lying at the heart of this model is a rejection of the belittling and pathologising approach implicit in social and medical discourses: "In our view, it is society which disables... Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments; by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society" (UPIAS/Disability Alliance, 1976: 3). Drawing inspiration from the feminist movement, the social model makes a differentiation between an impairment and disability:

*Impairment* is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment. *Disability* is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers (Barnes, 1991: 2, original emphasis).

This model therefore shifts the focus of debates about 'disability' away from pathologised individuals to a critical understanding of the society in which individuals and their impairments are contextualised. Yeo and Moore (2003) offer a graphic illustration (Figure 2) attempting to describe the feedback loops that link disability, unemployment and poverty throughout the world (but most particularly in the developing world<sup>12</sup>) (see also Beresford, 1996; Elwin, 1999; Tregaskis, 2002; Emmett, 2006).

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<sup>12</sup> One of the primary difficulties facing researchers, especially those focusing on the 'developing' world, is a lack of reliable data and so, while the linkages between disability and development have often been commented on, they have not been systematically examined (Elwin, 1999; Everett, 2006). For example, after a literature survey of 44 of international development journals, Yeo and Moore argue that "[d]espite an increasing awareness within the development field that disabled people are among the poorest, research on poverty and disability is rare and there is widespread exclusion of disabled people within development and research organizations" (Yeo and Moore, 2003: 587). They describe this phenomenon as the continued "medicalisation of disability" (*ibid*: 575). Miles (2006), in contrast, argues that "[r]ecent bibliographical surveys suggest that thousands of studies and papers have been produced on disability in the 'non-western' world; but very little research using credible methodologies, focusing specifically on disability and poverty in developing and transitional countries, with publication in academic journals after independent peer review" (section three, ¶ 1).

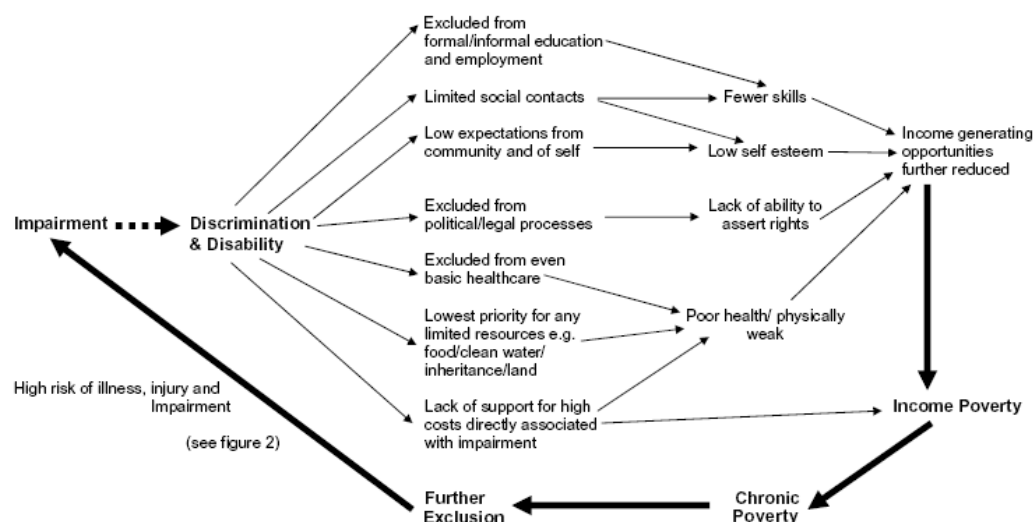


Figure 2: Disability/Poverty Cycle (Yeo and Moore, 2003: 572)

While it is important to appreciate and celebrate the activist message of the social model (as the opening quotation indicates), the imperfect, unpredictable and, in some cases, frail corporal body with the impairment should not be forgotten (Parr and Butler, 1999; Clare, 2001; Snyder and Mitchell, 2001). Besides being a site for the inscription of certain social discourses, the 'disabled' body is also often experienced by the individual as clumsy or unwilling for a range of biomedical, functional or structural reasons. The challenge, therefore, is to recognise and encourage the blurring of categories such as 'disability', thereby creating the opportunity for the redefinition of social categories and reinterpretation of bodily experiences, without drifting into the "poststructuralist romance" of nomad thought and the hybrid body which exemplifies "the flight from the messiness of disability into myth and metaphor" (Dorn, 1998: 184). Parr and Butler (1999:8) have drawn together a number of the varying terminologies used in writings about disability, to suggest that disability can be thought of

...as different states of being on a continuum of human mind/body characteristics; as a biomedical categorisation (commonly referred to as an 'illness'); as a functional limitation (referring to an 'impairment'); or as a disability (referring to experiences of inequality due to physical and social barriers within society).

These states provide us with a functional vocabulary to speak about the disabled experience.

Much of the writing and activism around the social model has focused on the relationship between disability and employment: exclusion from the mainstream economy has created the dependencies experienced by disabled people. For example, from the original UPIAS declaration:

In the final analysis the particular form of poverty principally associated with physical impairment is caused by our *exclusion from the ability to earn a living on a par with our able bodied peers due to the way employment is organized*. This exclusion is linked with our exclusion from participation in the social activities and provisions that make general employment possible (UPIAS/Disability Alliance, 1976: 14; added emphasis).

Many of the writers and theorists, drawing on materialist Marxist analysis, focused on the importance of 'modes of production' in creating disability by "devaluing bodies which do not conform to the space-time work regimes of capitalist society" (Parr and Butler, 1999:4; see also Oliver, 1990; Barnes, 1991; Shakespeare, 1993). Barnes explains that such a materialist, social model

'reading' of the social organisation of work has a number of advantages. First, it enables a positive, or at least not a hostile, understanding of interventions aimed at improving the working environment of individuals. Second, it demands a focus on the difficulties caused by disabling aspects of the working environment. Third, it dismisses any attempts to understand the unemployment or underemployment of disabled people "in isolation from other factors such as education, transport, the built environment, access, ideology and culture" (Barnes, 2000: 444). Finally, its most radical implication, given these points, is that 'mainstreaming' policies will always have a limited effect, and so the 'full' employment of disabled people requires a "reformulation of the meaning of and the organization of work" (*ibid*, 444-5).

The activism inspired by this understanding of the social model has been remarkably successful in shifting governmental discourses in both the UK and in South Africa. For example, the South African government's adoption of *A White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (INDS) in 1997, explicitly recognised the need for the state to shift from a medical model to a human rights/developmental model that draws heavily on the social model. It triggered the formulation of a range of legislative and policy measures to prevent discrimination against disabled people in the workplace, and to encourage the elimination of structural barriers to disabled people entering the workforce. The elimination of barriers has also begun to be recognised by the large international development organisations: "Unless disabled people are brought into the development mainstream, it will be impossible to cut poverty in half by 2015 or to give every girl and boy the chance to achieve a primary education by the same date" (Wolfensohn, 2002: 26)<sup>13</sup>. Unfortunately, as the long history of the Women's Movement has shown, a formal commitment to the full inclusion of disabled people does not necessarily mean realities on the ground change – a process known as 'policy evaporation':

Gender-policy evaporation is a common phenomenon. Sometimes the policy evaporates bit by bit, between the formulation of a policy and its implementation. Sometimes you have only to turn over a page of a development plan, and all the gender issues previously mentioned have suddenly disappeared. Evaporation can be a very rapid process! (Longwe, 1997: 150).

Mainstreaming is built on a recognition that the target group (disabled people, women) have different needs and priorities from the mainstream (the able-bodied, men) and, as the experience above indicates, the commitment to explicitly include and empower this group must be reiterated at every stage of the policy and implementation process. Albert, Dube and Riis-Hansen (2005:6), adapting a UNDP definition of gender mainstreaming, offer the following definition of disability mainstreaming:

Mainstreaming disability into development... is the process of assessing the implications for disabled people of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making disabled people's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that disabled people benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve disability equality.

As the previous section highlighted, a formative moment in the formulation and implementation of policy is the definition of a 'target group'. While this is always a deeply political process – these categories are socially constructed and therefore the result of contestation – as the discussion thus far has made clear, the definition of disability employed in such mainstreaming processes defines the ideological thrust of the process. The operationalisation of the term, within a bureaucratic

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<sup>13</sup> Wolfensohn was president of the World Bank at this time and he made these comments were made in the context of the Millennium Development Goals.

framework like the state or a large development organisation, often either favours an attribution model (a definition of characteristics) or a relational model (an assessment of functional limitation *within the work environment*) (Swartz *et al.*, 2006).

Different definitions of disability have been employed in legislation and policy across the South African government, with different combinations of attribution and relational elements. In the context of this research, the pertinent definition that informs the Extended Public Works Programme (the legislation that frames WfW's work) states that "'Disability' means, in respect of a person, a permanent impairment of a physical, intellectual, or sensory function, which results in restricted, or lack of, ability to perform an activity in the manner, or within the range, considered normal for a human being" (DoF, 2001)<sup>14</sup>. This definition draws heavily on the notion of a static, attribution model of disability and stands in stark contrast to the far more relational definition adopted by the Social Services Cluster Committee of Cabinet in 2005:

Disability is the loss or elimination of opportunities to take part in the life of the community, equitably with others, that is encountered by persons having physical, sensory, psychological, developmental, learning, neurological or other impairments, which may be permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, thereby causing activity limitations and participation restriction with the mainstream society. These barriers may be due to economic, physical, social, attitudinal and / or cultural factors.

The question of how best to bureaucratised such a dynamic but fluid definition, however, remains a contested question within government<sup>15</sup>.

In a review of the impact of the enabling legislation and policy frameworks in South Africa, Dube (2005:7) found that failures in implementation were due to "limited conceptual understanding, poor championing, inadequate or inappropriate institutional arrangements, and a general lack of capacity. Two other factors that have contributed to the poor implementation of legislation and policies are that the definition and nature of disabled people's participation have not been adequately reviewed and articulated, and that the policy requirements for disability mainstreaming are not adequately linked to performance management, thereby undermining commitment to implementation."

The primary issues, then, arising from both international and South African experience of the implementation of disability policy, are that clear and systematic policy and institutional tools need to be put in place to ensure a system of accountability, *and* that an emphasis needs to be placed on the 'nature of the inclusion'<sup>16</sup> or 'participation' of disabled people. Albert *et al.*, (2005:40) unfortunately warn that "de-politicised and technocratic approaches tend to be favoured by those

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<sup>14</sup> The EPWP's *Summary of Core Definitions for Monitoring Purposes* indicates that the definitions for the targeted groups of individuals are at the same as those in the Preferential Procurement Regulations Act of 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Although, even under the best of circumstances, theorists and practitioners highlight the difficulty in "balanc[ing] scientific concerns (like reliability and validity) with the practical and pragmatic concerns requiring real-world-trade-offs. One has to give up some reliability and validity, sensitivity and specificity if, in fact, the goal also is to come up with something really practical and inexpensive to administer. It is not possible to achieve all of these" (Jette, 1999: 4). For example, in the US applicants have to go through a rigorous 'five step disability test' and as a consequence "disability payments comprise only 15% of total social security benefit payments, yet account for 45% of the administrative costs" (Mitra, 2005, in Nattrass, 2006: 7).

<sup>16</sup> "Mainstreaming should not just be about inclusion, it must be about the precise nature of that inclusion. It is absolutely essential that the broader, more radical goals of disability mainstreaming, that is self-empowerment, self-determination and equality are not soft peddled. It cannot be stressed strongly enough or often enough that disability is a human rights issue and as such it is always a political issue" (Albert *et al.*, 2005: 11).

who either feel comfortable seeing disability as a somewhat neutral question of equal access or don't want to rock the boat they have just managed to get invited on board."

There are two problematic aspects to the trends identified above. If we return to Barnes' (2000) four advantages of the social model, then reviews of the mainstreaming of disability concerns seem to indicate that the focus is on the first two aspects of the social model identified above – get them in and get them working. The problem with this is best captured in his analysis of a similar process that has unfolded in the UK:

Hence policies relating to the employment and the underemployment of disabled people remain focused almost exclusively on the supply rather than the demand side of labour. As a consequence, strategies which target and highlight the functional limitations of individuals with perceived impairments are prioritized and supported at the expense of those which draw attention to and, therefore, implicitly if not explicitly, seek to resolve the stark inequalities of the social organization of work. In many ways the rhetoric has changed but, on the whole, the policies have not (Barnes, 2000: 447).

The ability of appropriately skilled individuals to access work has become the focus of government policy, rather than explicitly addressing the constellation of factors that make such intervention necessary. The focus, therefore, remains on the disabled individual and enables depoliticised processes of access without inclusion. The politics of the social model are successfully evaporated, leaving only technocratic considerations. But there is one further, perhaps more nefarious, trend that has been occurring 'on the back' of the successes of the social model. The rise of neoliberal governmentality, with its emphasis on the "autonomization and responsabilization" (Rose, 1999: 476) of individuals and communities, has seen the state begin to adopt the disability movement's discourse around "overcoming dependency and promises of liberation, [in order] to impose new welfare deals, which take little or no account of other equally disabling barriers to employment" (Jolly, 2003: 519). The nature and implications of this idea in South Africa are explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

## **2.3. Conclusion**

This chapter provides an overview of the two primary bodies of literature that inform this research. It outlines the evolution of policy studies, from a discipline encapsulating high modernist rationalism and belief in the power of the state, to one that increasingly recognises the political and social nature of policy formulation and implementation. It argues that ambiguity has an important role to play in recruiting political support for a programme, and that, depending on the nature of the programme and the issues involved, this may either inspire innovation or increase levels of conflict between groups employing differing definitions during its implementation phase. The development of governmentality studies has also been sketched. Critiques of early research that focussed simply on the policies produced by government, have inspired a fresh wave of research that focuses on understanding the 'microphysics' of a state intervening in the lives of its citizens.

The chapter also describes the rise of the 'social model' of disability and examines disability mainstreaming as an attempt to operationalise this ideological movement into pragmatic interventions in the formulation and implementation of policy. Initial indications are that this process has led to the depoliticisation of some of the disability movement's demands. Drawing on the discussion in this chapter, the next chapter describes the methodology and methods employed to conduct this research.

### 3. Methodology

In this piece of research on the prisons, as in my the early work, the target of analysis wasn't 'institutions', 'theory' or 'ideology', but *practices* - with the aim of grasping the conditions which make these acceptable at a given moment; the hypothesis being that these types of practice are not just governed by institutions, prescribed ideologies, guided by pragmatic circumstances – whatever role these elements may actually play – but possess up to a point their own specific regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence and 'reason'. It is a question of analysing a 'regime of practices' – practices being understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and rules given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect... It's a matter of shaking this false self-evidence, of demonstrating its precariousness, of making visible not its arbitrariness, but its complex interconnections with a multiplicity of historical processes, many of them of recent date (Foucault, 1991b: 75).

This research seeks to trace a particular 'regime of practices' – the mainstreaming of disability – as it variously cascades, becomes transmuted or even evaporates as it is translated from policy intent into concrete policies and institutions, and finally implemented in practice. It seeks to try and understand the multitude of forces and processes that connect and collide to produce specific concrete outcomes – in this case, Working for Water's (WfW) difficulty with meeting its self-prescribed disability targets. Drawing on a framework proposed by Fischer (2003), influenced by Foucault's work, and shaped by the contextual realities of the way in which the programme functions, it will involve three stages of investigation and analysis:

The first, presented in Chapter 4, will map out some of the 'specific regularities', 'logic' and 'reason', described in the previous chapter as the 'rationalities of rule' that underpin and shape the policy's formulation and implementation. As the quotation above indicates, this is a matter of recognising that the programme, and the form it takes on during implementation, is the result of clear, if complex, wider historical and social processes. The second, presented in Chapter 5, explores the way in which these wider discourses have become concretised in the shape, priorities and functioning of WfW. It explores movement from policy intent into the formulation of particular policies and practices. The third, presented in Chapter 6, shows how the policies and organisational artefacts produced by WfW, the 'rules imposed and rules given, the planned and be taken for granted', interact with dynamics on the ground to give the programme its final 'implemented' form.

The current chapter describes two aspects of this research project. First, it outlines the methodological<sup>17</sup> rationale that informed the design and presentation of this research – drawing, as was indicated, on a framework proposed by Fischer and elements of governmentality studies. Second, it will describe the methods employed for and the processes that were involved in the collection of data and analysis during the research process.

#### 3.1. Methodological rationale

When I began the research, my intention, guided by the 'problem' that so few disabled people were participating in WfW, was to try to identify the barriers to their full involvement and propose ways in which those barriers could be removed or overcome. My investigation was driven by the question 'How'? However, my research quickly became pervaded with a more fundamental question: Why

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<sup>17</sup> "Although often confused or used synonymously, methodology and method are not the same. While methodology refers to the guiding theoretical framework for research, methods can be thought of as the tools for gathering and/or making sense of the data" (Grebe, 2009: 71).

were disabled not being/getting involved in the programme? This led me to deeper ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions: Why were disabled people a ‘targeted’ group, and what was the intended impact that the programme would have in their lives? It was the lack of definition and clarity in the policy and discourses of the organisation at this level that seemed to be causing the series of disconnects, between policy and the realities of practice, which rendered the technical (‘how’) issue a secondary concern. The deeper ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions are the concerns that lie at the heart of the research project described by governmentality studies and the argumentative policy analysis proposed by Fischer: an interest in understanding the way in which a particular phenomenon or group comes to be identified as a problem, the discourses and dynamics that interact to conceptualise an intervention, the concretisation of these forces into particular artefacts and institutions, and the complex and contradictory processes that unfold when they are implemented in particular contexts.

Fischer systematises these into a multi-methodological evaluation framework that identifies four interrelated discourses (two occurring at ‘first-order’ everyday and two at ‘second-order’ socio-cultural levels) which determine whether a programme will be viewed as being a success (or having ‘good reason’ (Fischer, 2003: 192)).

1. The first discourse is concerned with programme verification – the **technical-analytical discourse** – which investigates the efficiency of programme outcomes. The goal is to produce a firm assessment of the degree to which the programme fulfils its particular objectives and how efficiently it achieves these.
2. The second discourse is concerned with situational validation – the **contextual discourse** – which examines the relevance of the programme objectives to the situation. It seeks to interrogate the conceptualisations and assumptions underlying the problem situation.
3. The third discourse, which signals a shift from first-order to second-order evaluation, has to do with societal vindication – the **systematic discourse** – which explores the policy goal in order to determine whether it addresses a valuable function for existing social arrangements. Fischer suggests that this is about empirically assessing the consequences of the policy goal in terms of the whole social system – to what degree does it facilitate a particular type of social order?
4. Finally, the fourth discourse turns to ideological and values questions – the **ideological discourse** – which seeks to establish and critically examine the basis of social choice about social systems and their respective ways of life.

Social choice involves the interpretive part of social and political criticism, particularly at practice in political theory and philosophy. Most fundamental is the concept of a rational way of life and the good society... Although the function of such discourse is to tease out the value implications of policy arguments, it involves more than mere value clarification. It is concerned as well with the ways in which ideological discourse structures and restructures the world in which we live (Fischer, 2003: 195).

After outlining this methodological framework, however, Fischer is at pains to emphasise that these are not seen as static requirements but that they are rather “designed to orientate evaluation to a particular set of concerns” (Fischer, 2003: 193). He points out that typically, *evaluations will begin with which ever level has proven to be most contentious* and progressively expand to others as the argument develops. My research process and methodological orientation, therefore, was inverted from a relatively narrow interest in studying first-order concerns, to beginning with the second order concerns he identifies above and then ‘working backwards’ to understand the effects that these wider ‘system’ discourses were having on the more technical, first-order concerns.

The first part of this analysis involves linking the wider systems of social and economic production and reproduction to the ways in which “government defines a discursive field in which exercising power is ‘rationalized’”. This occurs, among other things, by the delineation of concepts, the



specification of objects and borders, the provision of arguments and justifications, etc. In this manner, government enables a problem to be addressed and offers certain strategies for solving/handling the problem” (Lemke, 2001: 191). It is about understanding how these dynamics frame<sup>18</sup> the policies and programmes that make up the project of rule (Li, 1999). Fischer (2003:41) explains that this is vital to the overall analysis because

the very terrain of social and political action is constructed and understood in terms of the languages used to portray and talk about political phenomena. Discourse theory, in this respect, focuses as much on the meta-politics of institutions and actions as it does on events and arguments as they more immediately present themselves. Focused as such on the commitments (political and intellectual) that are logically anterior to policy concepts, discourse analysis looks first at the rules that govern and make possible policy deliberation (p. 41; references removed).

However, as has been argued at length in the previous chapter, the analysis *must* move beyond the framing ‘meta-politics’ of particular practices to understand the “informal logic of [the] practical discourse” (Fischer, 2003: 133) employed by the people tasked with translating ‘high’ government policy into the ‘tools’ (such as programme policy, management guidelines, job descriptions, organisational structure) and practices of implementation. Fischer (2003) argues that such interpretive analysis is concerned less with ‘proving’ a causal *relationship*, and more with possible explanations of the causal *mechanism*, by understanding what shapes the actions of various actors – an approach he refers to as ‘quasi-causal’. He explains, quoting Yee (1996): “intersubjective meanings quasi-causally affect certain actions, not by directly or inevitably determining them but rather by rendering these actions plausible or implausible, acceptable or unacceptable, conceivable or inconceivable, respectable or disputable” (cited in Fisher, 2003: 159). This, then, requires an awareness of the ‘microphysics of power’ during the implementation process or, using Li’s (1999) formulation, an account of how the project of rule is accomplished in practice.

### 3.2. Method

This research traces the spread of disability policy in WfW from its framing by and within the ‘rationalities of rule’, to its formulation, institutionalisation and operationalisation within WfW, and then to a group of SANParks projects that are used as a case study about the translation of these different rationalities, policies and institutional dynamics into concrete practices and effects. It is an attempt to provide a rich, textured account of the context, causes and dynamics that characterise the difficulties that WfW has experienced in mainstreaming disability concerns. This research is, therefore, an exploratory interpretivist investigation using a case study approach<sup>19</sup> (Lin, 1998). As the research process unfolded and different issues, concerns and logistical considerations came into play, the methodology and method shifted (see above, although it always remained conceptualised exploratory and case study-based). This process closely resembled Fischer’s description of the hermeneutical circle of reason:

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<sup>18</sup> “A ‘frame’ – with its metaphoric origins in a picture frame, the photographer’s framing of a scene through the viewfinder, the skeletal frame of a house under construction – sets up an interpretive framework within which policy-related artefacts make sense... Frames direct attention toward some elements while simultaneously diverting attention from other elements... Contending frames entail not just different policy discourses – different language, understandings, and perceptions – and potentially different courses of action, but also different values, and different meanings” (Yanow, 2000: 11 & 12).

<sup>19</sup> Burawoy (1998) and Flyvbjerg (2006) have provided muscular arguments detailing the importance of this form of case study research, emphasising the power and importance of the reflexivity enabled by this form of research, and its role in production of ‘practical knowledge’, persuasive and novel insights, and thick, detailed descriptions of the complex, multitude of factors that produce social phenomena.

To probe specific propositions requires that others must be held constant. Such analysis, however, always occurs within a context of reference grounded in others set of prepositions. Moving outside of each framework to examine them from yet new frames permits the enquirer to step beyond the limits of his or her own languages and theories, past experiences, and expectations. This increases the number of relevant perspectives, but need not lead to a hopeless relativism, as is often argued. Because the hermeneutic process is typically initiated by external stimuli in the object-orientated world, critical interpretations can never be altogether detached from the world (Fischer, 2003: 135).

This reasoning was the dynamic throughout the process – constant negotiation with the project staff of theoretical, analytical and methodological possibilities until the right ‘fit’ and positioning between these forces was found. The most prominent example of this process was the shift, described above, shifting from the technical-analytical ‘how’ questions to the second order ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions. For pragmatic reasons the staff remained most interested in the first set of questions, even as I began to shift to these deeper questions. However, as the analysis in the following chapters indicates, this shift was not an absolute one – these deeper second order questions can only be asked when they are adequately framed within the contextual realities that shape practice. The description that follows, therefore, is a ‘rewording’ of the messiness and iterative processes that occurred – with data collection and analysis frequently overlapping and feeding one another.

### **3.2.1. Data collection**

The research involved two phases of data collection. The first phase began with a review of the published and ‘grey’<sup>20</sup> literatures and policies produced by, for and about the Working for Water programme, and a series of meetings with Guy Preston, the programme’s originator and chairperson, about the conceptualisation of the research. I then drew up a semi-structured interview schedule structured by governmentality-related questions (probing for the rationalities and discourses that underpin the staff’s conceptualisation of the programme), questions drawn from the legislation and policies that (formerly) govern the programme (probing the staff’s depth of awareness, understanding and practice) and questions influenced by the mainstreaming literature (in particular, a framework developed by Sadan (2005) to conduct a gendered analysis of WfW practice). I conducted seven semi-structured interviews with WfW staff, six with senior staff from WfW Head Office and one with the Western Cape Regional Project Manager, which were on average two hours long. While this represents a small sample, it effectively represents all of the national *senior* managers responsible for the design and implementation of the social aspects of WfW (which includes the responsibility for the mainstreaming of disability).

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<sup>20</sup> Grey literature conventionally describes research that is not published; for example, evaluations and reports produced by staff within the programme, commissioned by the programme or independent research produced about the programme. These included WfW (n.d., 1999, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2003, 2004a, 2004b), Common Ground (2003), Skills Factory (2003), Research Surveys (2004a, 2004b), GETNET (2005, 2006), Sadan (2005), Woodworth (2006), CASE (2007).

Interviewee	Position	Date(s)
Guy Preston	Chairperson	20/02/2007, 06/10/2007
Ahmed Khan	Deputy Director: Strategic Services	25/05/2007, 06/10/2007, 24/04/2008
Shaun Cozett	Deputy Director: Social Development	05/05/2008
Khan Matabeni	Manager: Social Development in charge of targeted employment	24/05/2008
Aadiela Moerat	Regional Project Manager: Western Cape	30/05/2008

**Table 1: WfW staff interviewed**

I think it is important to make a few comments about the actual process of doing the research, to address concerns that have been expressed about ‘deceptively tidy’ accounts of research that ignore the embodiment of research practices – “the disembodied researcher” (Ellingson 2006: 299; Seymour, 2001; Andrews 2007). As Ellingson (2006:307) has noted, writing our bodily experiences into the research “points to the expanding (albeit still not broad enough) group of people whose perspectives are and/or should be represented within the interdisciplinary health fields. Marking our ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, health status, and other aspects of our identities draws attention to the plurality of bodies who are both researchers and researched.” There is a small but growing literature of such reflexive accounts by disabled researchers that outlines the various ways in which their disability alters its shape and outcomes. These include discussions about issues of access and prejudice (Andrews 2007), the visibility of disability during fieldwork (Ellingson 2006), the effect of impairments and assistive technology (Seymour 2007), the self-perception and confidence shown by disabled researchers vis-à-vis their non-disabled counterparts (Tregaskis and Goodley 2005) and even the sensitivity of funding bodies to the needs of disabled researchers (Mercer, 2002).

Physical access<sup>21</sup> was less of an issue in the interviews with WfW staff, compared to access at SANParks. WfW staff were able and willing to meet me either in accessible offices (although accessibility did not always mean *easy* accessibility) or alternative, accessible venues. I felt that my visible disability, however, was a factor in a number of the interviews. As Hughes (2002) points out, our physical bodies are inscribed with markers of difference (sex, ethnicity, impairment) and it is these markers that are ‘read’ to make assumptions about our abilities and subjectivities. The visibility of my disability made ‘passing’ (the non-disclosure of disability to avoid negative perceptions (Goffman, 1963)), impossible. Feminist and disability writers have conventionally focused on power differentials in interview situations where the presumption is that the researcher holds substantial power (Oakley 1981; Barnes and Mercer 1997; Finlay 2002). However, it is possible for researchers to be vulnerable in interview situations (Cotterill 1992) and, with the negative perceptions associated with disability, I certainly found that ‘perception management’ (Goffman, 1963) became an intrinsic part of the interview processes. I wanted to appear competent enough to be taken seriously without being perceived as trying too hard, or intimidating staff with the impression that I was a ‘disability expert’.

These power relations were made even more complex by the fact that I, a visibly disabled person, was asking able-bodied staff questions about an aspect of their overall organisational practice at which they were performing poorly. I therefore often found myself attempting to ensure that those I

<sup>21</sup> Setting up the interviews was a different matter altogether. Having Dr Preston’s backing meant that people took my requests for interviews seriously but, being senior staff in such a large organisation, their time pressures often made finding a convenient interview time quite challenging.

was interviewing did not feel defensive about their practice so that they could honestly reflect on the 'current state of play'. In these situations I often experienced the conflict of interest between my 'academic' and 'political' selves described by Mark Priestley (1997). For example, I often struggled with the degree to which I should engage and challenge perceptions when I was probing interviewees' understanding of disability or their awareness of relevant legislation and policy. Rather than developing a general rule about these situations, I negotiated them on a case-by-case basis.

Access issues emerged most clearly when I began to look for case study sites. Having adopted the research methodology outlined above, the importance of understanding the dynamics 'on the ground' was emphasised by interpretive policy analysts (e.g. Yanow, 2000; Fischer 2003) and governmentality researchers (e.g. Li, 1999; Gupta, 2001; Mosse, 2004) alike. For example, invoking the notion of "the self is the instrument of research" Yanow (2000:64) argues for the "use of the analyst's own kinesthetic, effective, and behavioural experience as proxy for that of others, in an initial effort to understand the values, beliefs, and feelings" of those involved). There were many likely and attractive projects throughout the country that were looking at disability in different ways or that were well-established. However, as I investigated them<sup>22</sup>, there were just too many practical obstacles to being able to perform such research in person. Performing research at these sites presented significant challenges for my disabled and impaired body – I had to take into account the physical access ability of these spaces as well as the additional logistical challenges I had to face, an experience shared and detailed by Andrews (2007). In my case these included additional costs and complications of employing an assistant, use of accessible transport, and negotiating changes and delays in the research process due to health concerns. Then, somewhat by chance, I discovered that WfW projects were operating in the forests surrounding my university – SANParks had active projects throughout Table Mountain – and an initial investigation revealed it was a good site. Unfortunately, despite senior staff within SANParks being excited about the research, this meant that I had to approach *their* Social Science Research Committee. They need a proposal in their format, detailing and motivating for my research<sup>23</sup>. This process, delayed by the departure of the person processing my application, took about three months. I provide a complete description of the physical premises of the projects I investigated in Chapter 6 but it is worth noting here that two of the three were accessible (although not always easily by wheelchairs – small steps, dirt paths to buildings etc).

The interviews were conducted either at WfW project offices or SANPark's office in Westlake shopping and office centre. I had relatively extensive, two hour interviews with all three project leaders using a slightly modified version of the interview schedule described above. Based on these interviews and interest displayed by the staff, I selected one of the project sites to conduct additional interviews and non-participant observations. I was able to conduct an additional three interviews with one project leader and hold a group discussion with a number of the contractors employed by the programme. I also attended their monthly meetings with contractors, which largely focused on ensuring that the quality of work performed by contractors was maintained and that health and safety issues were closely monitored. I also attended quarterly meetings with elected participants, which were intended to track issues that were emerging (that may not be tackled by the contractors). I had initially intended to interview disabled participants as well, but only four (out

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<sup>22</sup> I tried for a time to pursue such options – arranging telephonic interviews with a project leader in KwaZulu-Natal – and yet found these options frustrating and limited. In one case we had five telephone conversations, none of which were longer than 15 minutes, each of which were interrupted or fragmented by the interviewee's schedule.

<sup>23</sup> I thought it was instructive to note that despite the geographic proximity of this project to WfW Head Office, bureaucratically and emotionally it functioned as if it was one of the programme's most distant projects. This 'headspace' distance (always in my mind a contrast with the geographical proximity of head office) and its effect on the functioning of the programme is a theme I return to in Chapter 6.

of 300 staff) were disabled and, despite concerted attempts and genuine effort on the part of the project leader and contractors, it proved impossible to organise these before my period of research ended (gaining access to SANParks had taken far longer than I had anticipated in my planning). This is a limitation of this research and should definitely be the target of future research. Finally, all of this information was supplemented with a review of SANParks documents and policy.

Interviewee	Position	Date(s)
Jason de Smidt	Project Manager: Table Mountain National Park – North	12/08/2008, 30/09/2008, 04/10/2008, 14/11/2008
Jaclyn Smith	Project Manager: Table Mountain National Park – South	01/10/2008
Xolelwa Lusithi	(Acting) Project Manager: Table Mountain National Park – Central	20/10/2008

**Table 2: SANParks staff interviewed**

### 3.2.2. Data analysis

Following Foucault and Fischer, the first part of the analysis was focused on how particular ideas, concepts, beliefs come to dominate the public sphere and become accepted, and how these privilege some discourses<sup>24</sup> and actors over others. More specifically, it involved a review of key texts, statements by political leaders and analysis in order to ‘map’ the way in which the wider ‘rationalities of rule’ have structured the wider discourses around particular core policy ideas – poor people, disability, and development and social security<sup>25</sup>. This is important because

the opening up, or ‘deconstructing’, of policy discourse can show how it emerges as the unintended consequence of a confluence of events and ideas. It can also show how seemingly technical issues can continue normative commitments, as well as what sort of institutional arrangements make this possible. Discourse analysis, in this way, helps us see which institutional dimensions are firmly entrenched and which structural elements are more open to change (Fischer, 2003: 85).

To achieve this, my analysis focused on three aspects of discourse described by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) – ‘nodal points’, the ‘field of discursivity’, and ‘closure’ – as well as ‘floating signifiers’ from Laclau’s later work (1990). They argue that discourses are formed by the partial and temporary fixation of meaning around ‘nodal points’. “A nodal point is a privileged sign around which the other signs are ordered; the other signs acquire their meaning from their relationship to the nodal point. In medical discourses, for example, ‘the body’ is a nodal point around which many other meanings are crystallised” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 26). In contrast, ‘floating signifiers’ are those nodal points over which different discourses struggled to invest particular kinds of meaning. For example, the ‘disabled body’ is invested with very different sets of meanings by medical model discourses and social model discourses. The struggle to tie down meaning within these nodes is referred to as attempting to achieve ‘closure’; that is, excluding all of the other possible meanings that the sign might have. These other meanings, the ‘reservoir surplus of meaning’ (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), Laclau and Mouffe refer to as the ‘field of discursivity’.

<sup>24</sup> The definition of a discourse remains deeply contested terrain. I use the term throughout this document to refer both to “socially organised frameworks of meaning that define categories and specify domains of what can be said and done” (Burman, 1994: 2) and “a multi-faceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved” (Davies and Harré, 1990: 47).

<sup>25</sup> These are the core elements of the policy framework that provides WfW with its *raison d’être*.

The analysis, therefore, focused on the way in which two underpinning ‘rationalities of rule’<sup>26</sup> that characterise this socio-economic period, neoliberalism and transformation, have structured discourses with ‘poor people’ and ‘disabled people/people with disabilities’ as nodal points (although, as is already evident, the contested nature of these terms also makes them ‘floating signifiers’). At the risk of pre-empting the following chapter, this analysis found that two sets of binary oppositions (or dichotomies) dominate *both of these discourses*: inclusion versus marginalisation and independence versus dependency. A widely accepted idea in discourse analysis is that Western thought has been dominated by such dichotomies, in which one half of the binary is favoured over the other (e.g. white over black, man over women, able over disabled), and that the process of uncovering these binaries enables new forms of meaning to emerge<sup>27</sup> (e.g. Derrida, 1981; Haraway, 1991; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). The construction of a group as one half of the binary (marginalised, dependent) requires, in policy terms, an intervention to ‘make’ this group the other, more desirable half (integrated, independent). However, as I show, these binaries, and the interventions they imply, are the product of a particular ‘regime of rule’ that seeks to maintain the balance of forces in society.

The analysis of the interviews, and the other textual and experiential data, had two parts; both guided by Fischer’s (2003) suggestion that the analysis must reflect

interconnections amongst the *empirical data*, *normative assumptions* that structure our understanding of the world, the *interpretive judgements* involved in the data collection process, the particular circumstances of a *situational context* (in which the findings are generated or the prescriptions apply), and the *specific conclusions*. The scientific acceptability of the conclusions depends ultimately on the full range of interconnections, not just the empirical findings (Fischer, 2003: 191; added emphasis).

The first part of the analysis was a process of coding, following the method outlined by De Wet and Erasmus (2005) to increase the rigour of qualitative data analysis. The first stage was a close reading of the data, noting points of interest and an overall impression of the themes that seem to be emerging. The second stage involved assigning specific, provisional labels to text that contain particular categories of information (and keeping a journal of emerging themes and connections). The third stage involved identifying finer codes that ‘nestle’ within the broader codes already identified. Once this has been completed the analysis moved to ‘second level coding’, which involved using the theoretical framework and research questions that inform the research design to identify more complex patterns and relationships within the data (De Wet and Erasmus, 2005). In the fourth stage, then, the first level codes identified thus far are arranged into thematic clusters. The final stage was concerned with finding relationships, patterns and possible explanations between these clusters (De Wet and Erasmus, 2005).

For this part of the analysis, I focused on identifying the narrative storylines<sup>28</sup> and arguments<sup>29</sup> about the general practice of the programme, and more specifically the place of disability within these

<sup>26</sup> Foucault may also refer to these as ‘regimes of truth’, while Hall (2003) would probably prefer to use the term ideologies (see footnote 11 above).

<sup>27</sup> Put differently, the deconstruction unsettles the articulation between the different well-established and taken for granted elements of the discourse – creating the possibility for them to be re-articulated in new ways.

<sup>28</sup> Hajer (1995: 56) explains that a storyline “is a generative sort of narrative that allows actors to draw upon various discursive categories to give meaning to specific or social phenomena.”

<sup>29</sup> The difference between narratives and arguments were described in the previous chapter thus: narrative connects various elements into a plot that describes ‘what is’, whereas an argument is designed to lead as to conclusions - what ‘ought’ to be (Fischer, 2003: 181). Some of the themes involved describing ‘what is’ (e.g. the prioritising of environmental goals over social goals), while others had strong the normative, ‘ought to’

narratives/arguments, that was emerging. I paid particular attention to the nodal points and floating signifiers that make up these narratives/arguments and compared and contrasted them to those that emerged during the 'governmentality' stage of analysis. Finally, following Foucault's interest in understanding the 'regime of practices', I noted possible quasi-causal connections between these narratives/arguments and the tools and artefacts of institutional design and functioning (the 'rules imposed and rules given, the planned and be taken for granted').

### **3.2.3. Ensuring the anonymity of participants**

This research focuses on one of the few weak areas of WfW practice and the opinions expressed by staff are potentially contentious. The small sample of participants (drawn from a relatively small organisation) also makes the protection of individual identities a particular concern. I have therefore assigned all participants pseudonyms; making an effort to ensure there is no necessary link between the ethnicity or gender of the participant and that of their pseudonym.

## **3.3. Conclusion**

This chapter shows the process that led to the methodological design of the research and outlines its implications for the method and analytical processes employed. It notes the three stage process of data collection and analysis that make up this research project: a focus on establishing the underlying rationalities of rule that inform the programme's design and functioning, tracing the effects of these discourses and other factors in the policy and practice advocated by WfW Head Office by interviewing five staff members, and an analysis of the discourses, narratives, practices and artefacts that shape WfW's implementation of policy 'on the ground' through six interviews with SANParks staff across three projects. By conducting analysis at these three levels it is possible to begin to note the continuities and disconnects that characterise policy as it is translated from its original intent to the practice of the organisation. The next chapter begins this analysis by outlining those rationalities of rule and wider discourses that frame WfW policy and practice.

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elements (e.g. the importance of delivery). The narrative elements often were explanations for why practice was not meeting expectations, while the argumentative elements assert that the way things are is the way they should be (i.e. the prioritisation of certain aspects of practice should persist).

## 4. Recognising the rationalities of rule: neoliberalism, the first/second economy and the Extended Public Works Programme

### 4.1. Introduction

Problematics of government may be analyzed, first of all, in terms of their political rationalities, the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualised, the moral justifications for particular ways of exercising power by diverse authorities, notions of the appropriate forms, objects and limits of politics, and conceptions of the proper distribution of such tasks among secular, spiritual, military and familial sectors. But, we suggest, problematics of government should also be analyzed in terms of their governmental technologies, the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions. Through an analysis of the intricate inter-dependencies between political rationalities and governmental technologies, we can begin to understand the multiple and delicate networks that connect the lives of individuals, groups and organizations to the aspirations of authorities in the advanced liberal democracies of the present (Rose and Miller, 1992: 175-6).

The possibilities and discourses that permeate government programmes, which shape their conceptualisation and implementation, are the product of wider and deeper underpinning ideas about how 'good government' and a desirable life may be obtained. This chapter will first outline the 'political rationalities', which I have also referred to as the 'rationalities'<sup>30</sup> of rule', that have framed the discursive fields and governmental technologies in the period during which this research was completed (2007-8) – neoliberalism and social transformation. It then traces the way these rationalities have been expressed in the primary discourse employed by the government, the first and second economy, and translated into a specific government programme, the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP). Following a brief review of the conceptualisation of disability in discourses concerning social assistance, it argues that these political rationalities, governmental discourses and programmes are structured around two sets of dichotomies, inclusion versus marginalisation and independence versus dependency, that describe both 'poor people' and 'people with disabilities'. It will suggest that this has resulted in the political problem of 'poor people' and 'disability' becoming a 'differentiated unity' – with dependence and marginalisation (problems) and integration and independence through entering the formal economy (solution) as common ingredients. This has resulted in the 'mainstreaming' of disability targets but effectively obscured the more radical and structuralist elements of the social model. This aspect of the argument will be 'taken up' and explored in more detail in the following chapters.

This chapter is necessarily a provocative argument about the 'intricate inter-dependencies' between underlying rationalities and their expression in government technologies and discourses because "to interpret discourse *qua* ideology is to *construct* a meaning which unfolds the referential dimensions of discourse, which specifies the multiple reference and shows how their entanglement serves to

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<sup>30</sup> Foucault was particularly interested in understanding the relationship between the practice of the state and its underlying 'rationalisation': "I think one must restrict one's use of this word to an instrumental and relative meaning... One isn't assessing things in terms of an absolute against which they could be evaluated as constituting more or less perfect forms of rationality, but rather *examining how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play within them, because it's true that 'practices' don't exist without a certain regime of rationality* (Foucault, 1991b: 79; added emphasis).



sustain relations of domination” (Thomson, 1984: 138). It is an attempt to surface and *reconstruct* a web of rationalities and discourses. Yet, as Thomson warns, the act of interpretation inevitably involves a process rewriting of these relations, and the product should therefore always be considered a partial and propositional.

## 4.2. Rationalities of Rule: Neoliberalism and Social Transformation

The entirety of our system of governance is therefore making the commitment that in the period ahead of us, it will do its best to live up to the imperative - Business Unusual! We speak of Business Unusual not referring to any changes in our established policies but with regard to the speedy, efficient and effective implementation of these policies and programmes, so that the lives of our people should change for the better, sooner rather than later (Mbeki, 2008).

Since 1994, the South African government's development strategies have reflected a mixture of (international) political and economic pragmatism, while trying to fulfil an ideological commitment to its historical roots and the South African electorate. This has resulted in a shift from the social democratically-inclined Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to the more neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) and, since 2002, the pursuit of a 'developmental state' model exemplified by the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA), the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Joint Skills Initiative (JIPSA) (Southall, 2006). This latest shift in government policy seems to have stemmed from a realisation that while GEAR has been relatively successful at securing macroeconomic stability and integrating South Africa's economy into the global market, these policies have failed to deliver the economic and developmental returns that global economic orthodoxy promised (Daniel *et al.*, 2005). However, as the quotation above from Thabo Mbeki's 2008 State of the Nation speech indicates, these shifts have been characterised more by their continuity, in terms of their underpinning rationalities, than significant change. The dual underpinning 'rationalities of rule' for South African government throughout this period, therefore, were centred on maintaining its commitment to *neoliberal* orthodoxy, while at the same time intervening in the economy (and other areas of social life) in order to increase the pace of *social transformation* (Streak and van der Westhuizen, 2004; Daniel, Southall and Lutchman, 2005; Southall, 2006).

However, as I will show, these two discourses became intertwined in very particular ways during Mbeki's time in office (1999-2008). Rose and Miller (1992) suggest that political rationalities have three primary characteristics: they have a moral form; an epistemological character; and a distinct idiom. The moral form provides the ideals or principles towards which government should be directed (e.g. freedom, economic efficiency, social justice). Political rationalities are also articulated in relation to and are able to conceptualise the population in particular ways that characterise their epistemological character. Finally, they adopt a distinct language, which acts as the 'intellectual machinery' for bringing social problems and issues into the political discourse. This section will describe these characteristics of the political rationalities identified above.

It has become relatively commonplace to attack the neoliberal character of many governments since the 1980s, and has remained popular in South Africa (the so-called " '96 class project") despite the growing influence of elements of the Left during the ascendancy of Jacob Zuma<sup>31</sup> (e.g. Bond, 2000; Hart, 2007). However, while neoliberalism has provided a clear enemy for leftist academics and activists, there has been a growing discomfort with its discussion in general (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Jessop, 2002; Hart, 2002, 2004; Castree, 2006; Hart, 2007). These authors have emphasised that neoliberalism never exists in pure form, but rather is articulated with a number of other more local,

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<sup>31</sup> Jacob Zuma was elected president in 2009.

contextual factors to form “actually existing neoliberalism” (Peck and Tickell, 2002) or “neoliberalism-plus” (Castree, 2006). According to these authors, there is no single neoliberalism, and yet a sustained analysis of shifts in a wide range of social endeavours reveals patterns of regularity which indicate the spread of an underlying logic through systems of discourse. While each instance of neoliberalism may be specific, each also invokes a deeper, commonly held logic, because each is underpinned by and interacts with a common global system of capital accumulation. Before describing the particularities of the form that neoliberalism took during this period, it is worth pointing to some of the underlying logics that characterise it.

Neo-liberalism reactivates liberal principles: scepticism over the capacities of political authorities to govern everything for the best; vigilance over the attempts of political authorities to seek to govern. Its language is familiar and needs little rehearsal. Markets are to replace planning as regulators of economic activity. Those aspects of government that welfare construed as political responsibilities are, as far as possible, to be transformed into commodified forms and regulated according to market principles. Economic entrepreneurship is to replace regulation, as active agents seeking to maximise their own advantage are both the legitimate locus of decisions about their own affairs and the most effective in calculating actions and outcomes. And more generally, active entrepreneurship is to replace the passivity and dependency of responsible solidarity as individuals are encouraged to strive to optimise their own quality of life and that of their families (Rose and Miller, 1992: 199).

This retreat of the state has received particular attention as a rationality of rule that is characterised by a proliferation of “indirect techniques” for enlisting individuals in their own self-management (Rose, 1999). “Rather than *less* government, neoliberalism in this view represents a *new modality* of government predicated on interventions to create the organizational and subjective conditions for entrepreneurship – not only in terms of extending the ‘enterprise model’ to schools, hospitals, housing estates and so forth, but also in inciting individuals to become entrepreneurs of themselves” (Hart, 2004: 92, original emphasis). Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, neoliberalism actually increases the integration of individual subjects into systems of ‘capillary’ power (Foucault, 1977) by enrolling them in the overarching rationality of rule. Rose (1999:175) describes this as involving “a double movement of autonomization and responsabilization” which focus on strengthening the “individual morality, organisational responsibility and ethical community” of the population.

The need for the transformation of the apartheid socio-spatial economy has underpinned much of ANC and government policy since 1994. The moral mandate and imperative for a liberation movement taking control of a country in which inequality was systematically created was clear, supported by a rich history of rights-based discourses. This mandate of social transformation has necessitated the active intervention of the government in a number of economic and social spheres, but rapidly became tempered by a wariness of the effects of these on international and local capital. Consider, for example, President Mandela's *Preface* to the government's *White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme*:

Our country is going through a profound transformation at all levels of government and society to ensure the implementation of the RDP. At the heart of the Government of National Unity is a commitment to effectively address the problem of poverty and the gross inequality evident in almost all aspects of South African society. This can only be possible if the South African economy can be firmly placed on the path of high and sustainable growth. The interdependence of the objectives of reconstruction and development on the one hand, and growth on the other is now widely accepted, not only within the Government and the Parliament, but indeed throughout South African society (RSA, 1994: 4)

From the beginning of the new dispensation, then, government policy linked reconstruction and development to growth and economic performance (Adelzadeh, 1996). With the emergence of the macroeconomic austerity of GEAR, the transformative efforts of the state remained largely restricted to the expansion of social grants (expenditure doubling in real terms between 1994 and 2004; Seekings, 2008: 29), contributions towards what the government refers to as the 'social wage' (in the form of water, electricity, health care, housing, sanitation, education and transport) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).

During Mbeki's first term (1999-2004), social transformation increasingly became 'articulated' with the importance of the emergence of a 'patriotic' black bourgeoisie class (Southall, 2004). For example, "As part of the realisation of the aim to eradicate racism in our country, we must strive to create and strengthen a black capitalist class. A critical part to create a non-racial society is the deracialisation of the ownership of productive property" (Mbeki, 1999). In fact, "he went so far as to equate the failure of black economic empowerment with the ANC failing to achieve its historic mission, namely to eradicate racism" (Gumede, 2002, in Sole, 2005: 102). This, then, was the deal that was struck by the ANC government – "macroeconomic stability and openness to international trade and finance, in return for support from business for black economic empowerment (BEE)" (Gelb, 2003:13; Bond, 2000).

#### **4.3. The First/Second Economy Discourse and the Extended Public Works Programme**

By the government's ten year review in 2003, however, it had become clear that, despite increasing access to 'social wage' resources, income poverty, inequality and unemployment had risen since 1994 (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006). This signalled a shift in governmental discourse<sup>32</sup>, driven by the ANC and Mbeki, in which the divide between 'First and Second Economies' became constructed as the primary concern of the state. This signalled a formal movement away from the austere neoliberalism of GEAR towards an interventionist, developmental state (Streak and van der Westhuizen, 2004; Daniel *et al.*, 2005; Southall, 2006; Hart, 2006, 2007). Mbeki explained the texture of this shift:

It is sometimes argued that higher rates of economic growth, of 6 percent and above, would, on their own, lead to the reduction of levels of unemployment in our country. This is part of a proposition about an automatic so-called trickledown effect that would allegedly impact on the 'third world economy' as a result of a stronger 'first world economy'. None of this is true. The reality is that those who would be affected positively, as projected by these theories, would be those who, essentially because of their skills, can be defined as already belonging to the 'first world economy'. The task we face therefore is to devise and implement a strategy to intervene in the 'third world economy' and not assume that the interventions we make with regard to the 'first world economy' are necessarily relevant to the former... This will require sustained government intervention. This is because, given the structural disjuncture that separates the 'first world economy' and 'third world economies' we cannot and should not expect that there would be any mechanism inherent within the 'first world economy' that would result in the latter transferring the required resources to the former, to enable it to outgrow its third world nature. We mention resource transfers because this is exactly what the 'third world economy' requires to enable it to break out of its underdevelopment. These resources include education and training, capital for business development, and the construction of necessary social and economic infrastructure, marketing information and appropriate

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<sup>32</sup> This dichotomy featured prominently in the ANC 10 Year Review in 2003, its manifesto for the 2004 election, the State of the Nation address in February 2004 and the opening of Parliament in May 2004 (Hart, 2006).

technology and the ways and means to ensure higher levels of safety and security for both persons and property (Mbeki, 2003a: 3).

This shift was therefore built around a discursive differentiation between the first economy and second economy in which 'poverty' and 'underdevelopment' were understood to be a product of the 'disconnection' of marginalised groups from the mainstream economy, implying that governmental intervention should be aimed at 'better integration' (du Toit and Neves, 2007; Hart, 2006; 2007). This differentiation between a first and second economy has been challenged on a number of accounts (Devey *et al.*, 2006; see also the November 2007 special issue of *Africanus*). Du Toit and Neves (2007) argue that this discourse is problematic because it inadequately represents the lived reality of 'poor' people, leaves untouched the presumption that the larger system operates to the advantage of these 'marginalised' groups' advantage and supports a prominent government discourse that implies that poverty alleviation is a matter of service delivery (see also Frye, 2007).

By recognising the existence of a structural disconnection, without questioning the role of the first economy, but focusing instead on 'resource transfers' (primarily skills) to these 'marginalised groups', this discourse has a number of effects. First, it establishes a set of dichotomies which recreate the assumptions of modernisation theory (e.g. Rostow, 1960) that categories such as modern, formal, Western, urban etc is superior and will lead to a better quality of life. Second, this disconnection enables the government to have one set of neoliberal, non-interventionist policies for the first economy (satisfying the needs of capital), while addressing the 'second economy' by preparing (read: creating) economically viable citizens for the work that will be created (Frye, 2007). Drawing on the work of Polanyi, Hart (2002; 2004; 2006) argues that this rise in interventionism is an expression of the 'double movement' of capitalism, in which the social counter-tendencies to the destructiveness of the market (the rise of resistance and demands for social considerations) are contained *within* the capitalist system as it constantly reforms and reworks itself. The extreme neoliberalism of the 1980s in the international development arena (exemplified in the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Policies) and 1990s in South Africa (exemplified by GEAR) created a rise in discontent and the mobilisation of a range of social groups demanding better 'social protection'. This form of interventionism may thus serve to absorb and depoliticise these groups by creating systems which address the (destructive) social effects of the market *while leaving the operation of the market unaffected*. For example, Hart argues that the 'second economy' discourse forms part of a wider rearticulation of race, class and nationalism by conservative elements within the ANC, in order to depoliticise the project of rule and control the mobilisation of groups hostile to the current neoliberal configuration of the state (Hart, 2007).

The operative question, then, is not whether the First/Second Economy is an accurate portrayal of reality, but rather how it is being constructed and deployed to political – or, perhaps more accurately, depoliticising – work. What is significant about this discourse is the way it defines a segment of society that is superfluous to the 'modern' economy and is in need of paternal guidance... those falling within this class are citizens, but second class... To qualify for a range of targeted programmes, they must not only be identified and registered, but also defined as indigent (Hart, 2006: 26).

The first/second economy discourse, then, represents a rearticulation of the neoliberal and social transformation rationalities. The primary governmental technology proposed to meet 'the challenges of the second economy' is the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) which was launched in 2003. This programme is worth examining in closer detail for two reasons: first, WfW, as the most prominent and longest running Public Works Programme, provided a blueprint for centralisation of this wider programme and, second, since its promulgation WfW is under the EPWP and so the legislative and policy frameworks that govern the EPWP apply equally to WfW.

The EPWP intends to “ensure that we draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work, and that these workers gain skills while they work, and thus take an important step to get out of the pool of those who are marginalized” (Mbeki, 2003b). As this quotation exemplifies, “PWPs [Public Works Programmes] have almost come to dominate the current social protection and labour market discourse, representing the policy instrument of choice to address both poverty and unemployment” (McCord, 2004: 6). There are inherent dangers to eliding these two objectives, as is explicitly acknowledged by the ANC in a policy document: “We must be careful to separate out issues about poverty eradication and issues about the creation of sustainable jobs when considering the employment question. While these two objectives are linked they require different approaches” (ANC, 2002: section 126). However, the discourse around the EPWP continues to emphasise the potential of the programme to promote labour performance through work experience and training (with the presumption that supply will create its own demand) and simultaneously contribute to poverty reduction. McCord (2004:7) argues that

there is a fundamental mismatch between the government’s analysis of the labour market and the poverty problem in South Africa, and the nature of the policy response. The EPWP offers short-term employment and training, on the premise that supply-side interventions are an appropriate and effective response to transitional unemployment... But the structural economic and labour market problems which characterise the South African economy are not transitional problems, and in the South African context supply-side interventions such as upgrading human capital have only limited potential to address the unemployment problem.

The EPWP, therefore, may be appropriate as a poverty alleviation programme but not, in its current design, as an intervention that can reduce levels of unemployment. It took its current form after lengthy negotiation between the trade unions movement, the state and the private sector, when the notion of large-scale public works employment on a sustainable basis was dismissed for ideological and pragmatic reasons by both the state and the trade union movement (McCord, 2004). The result of the negotiations, therefore, was the Special Public Works Programme (SPWP), targeting objectives and conditions of employment as outlined in the SPWP Code of Conduct (DoL, 2002). This sets out participation targets (60% women, 20% youth and 2% disabled), prohibits employment exceeding 24 months in duration, and also allows for a derogation from the minimum wage in favour of a locally negotiated wage, in return for training inputs for workers of 2 days for every 20 worked (McCord, 2004).

The impact of the SPWP acting as the expression of the ‘differentiated unity’ between neoliberal and transformational rationalities<sup>33</sup> is visible in two primary ways in its design. First, as has been argued, the EPWP has been designed contrary to international experience. Consider, for example, that experience has shown that “the effectiveness of public works programmes in alleviating poverty can be compromised in various ways, including: poor targeting, low wages, limited coverage, temporary employment creation, low-quality or poorly maintained infrastructure, and unintended negative impacts (e.g. undermining food security by competing with labour needs in agriculture, or condoning child labour)” (Devereux, 2002: 1). Many of these elements are an explicit and *intentional* part of the SPWP design (e.g. low-wage, temporary employment). At very least, there is a tension between the transformative objectives of the programme (the choice to focus on ‘marginalised’ groups within

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<sup>33</sup> It is worth remembering that this design is the outcome of negotiations between the left and the right: the unions ensuring that the rights of workers in the formal economy are not impeded upon by this legislation (‘they are not our members anyway and if they do find work then they will become a member’), while the right conceptualise it as a responsibilisation and autonomisation initiative (‘expand the pool of employable workers’).

'poor' communities) and the form that the EPWP has taken (paying lower than market wages<sup>34</sup> in exchange for training<sup>35</sup>). While low wages are supposed to result in self-selection of the 'poorest of the poor', there is considerable evidence that this often does not occur in practice because, in many cases, the offered wage is higher or equal to local wages or because of the extremely high rates of unemployment and poverty. The involvement of the community in the selection process greatly improved the effectiveness and the appropriateness of those selected. However, a number of researchers have also commented on tension between the selection of 'target' labourers (especially 'marginalised' groups) and local cultural or social norms (Devereux, 2002; Haddad and Adato, 2002; McCord, 2004; Hope, 2006). The ambiguity created by having as its goal addressing both poverty alleviation and unemployment, therefore, creates the political space to build broad-based political support. However, its translation into legislation and policy 'surface' the contradictions between the underlying political rationalities, largely leaving the resolution of contradictory or discordant elements to technocrats tasked with implementing it 'on the ground'.

Second, as noted in the discussion about the conception of the first/second economy, this programme was aimed at specific 'marginalised' (or, in Hart's language, 'indigent') groups (woman, youth and the disabled) and is intended to be implemented in rural areas. As Hart (2006) emphasises, the political project of the neoliberal transformation of society *requires* the identification of problematic 'classes' of people (even if their lack of economic power is what makes them problematic), expert analysis of their deficiencies (inadequate access to capital, education, experience etc) and appropriate interventions to correct these deficiencies (loans, education, training etc). Miraftab (2004:254) argues that the targeting of these groups using 'transformative' discourse reduces

notions of empowerment and participation to individualized and economic change [thereby] depoliticiz[ing] these emancipatory concepts; meanwhile, to seek legitimacy for its acts, it adopts a socially concerned posture of social upliftment that politicizes decisions that government technocrats, policy makers and planners have traditionally claimed as mundane and technical. These sorts of double moves — depoliticization/politicization; inclusion/exclusion—are an important feature of neo-liberalism, highlighting the paradox of its policy processes and framework.

'People with disabilities', however, remain a somewhat surprising inclusion in such a programme. For example, in reviews of PWPs in South Africa, Haddad and Adato (2002), Sadan (2005) and Hope (2006) refer almost exclusively to the challenges and potential for social change in including women in PWPs, while ignoring or dismissing the potential involvement of the "physically weak" (Hope, 2006: 153). Devereux (2002:5) explains that

[b]y definition, public works programmes provide opportunities for enhanced income only to members of the economically active population: able-bodied unemployed or underemployed adults. Other poor and vulnerable groups who lack labour power — the elderly, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, orphans and other children from poor families — are 'unemployable' and are excluded from any income transfer programme with a work requirement.

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<sup>34</sup> This is a strategy known as 'self-targeting' where the poor self select and so the programme does not need to use means testing or other methods to ensure that the programme is reaching the correct participants (Devereux, 2002). The presumption is that if below market rates are paid everyone will be discouraged from working except the poor.

<sup>35</sup> Hope (2006), referring specifically to WfW, suggests that the pursuit of these social justice objectives is largely driven by the government's reluctance to be seen to be exploiting cheap black labour in an environmental project.

Indeed, the presumption that pervades much of the writing about PWPs is that disabled people are 'obviously' unemployable, not because they are socially marginalised but because they lack 'labour power', and should therefore remain dependent on other forms of social security. The question, then, is, 'why were they included as a target?' Answering this question requires a brief detour into the evolution of social security in South Africa because *poor* disabled people remain largely conceptualised as the recipients of grants.

#### **4.4. Disability in South Africa: the unemployable and the walking wounded**

Seekings (2008) argues that the South African state resisted giving justifications for the size and shape of the 'social assistance' system until very recently for two reasons: first, the state has remained deeply ambiguous about these programmes and, second, he points out that these remain popular interventions and, while it inherited them, the ANC has been content to take full credit for them. Nonetheless, strong currents within the ANC have long been hesitant about supporting Social Security. For example, from the ANC's election manifesto as long ago as 1994: "Although a much stronger welfare system is needed to support all of the vulnerable, the old, the disabled and the sick who currently live in poverty, a system of "handouts" for the unemployed should be avoided" (ANC 1994: 18). This aversion to 'handouts' has subsequently been articulated with progressive elements of social working and found expression in the 'developmental' welfare envisaged by the 1997 Social Welfare Policy. In their analysis of this policy, Sevenhuijsen *et al.* (2003) show that this aversion to handouts emerges as a dominant thread, noting its underpinning rationality of neoliberalism. They also note that the discourse of the Department of Social Development remained 'articulated' with more progressive 'rights-based' and 'community-centred' discourses:

We may conclude that there are different normative vocabularies at play that do not always fit easily together. The overarching framework can certainly be characterized as neoliberal; this shows in the emphasis on (economic) self-reliance, the development of human capital and respect for human rights. The neoliberal vocabulary is joined, however, by the more social democratic-orientated values of need, equity and basic welfare rights. But there is also an outspoken communitarian influence at play, stressing the family and the community (read women) as the primary location of care, which is potentially reinforced by invoking the principle of Ubuntu (Sevenhuijsen *et al.*, 2003: 305).

The articulation of these different discourses, made possible by an ambiguous overarching discourse centred on 'developmental' welfare, is an important part of retaining broad-based political support for the Department's approach to social assistance. However, whenever forced to translate these into specific 'governmental technologies', this neoliberal tendency emerges most strongly. For example, the failure of the ANC and the government to implement the central recommendation of the government appointed Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa – the introduction of a 'basic income grant' on a phased basis and conditional on administrative efficacy – and contestation of cases to the Constitutional Court to ensure the continued limited scope of eligibility (Seekings, 2008). Barchiesi (2005:378) provides a thorough indexing of the discourse that has sustained this position, paying particular attention to the relationship between constructions of 'the poor' and those groups deemed 'suitable' to access social assistance:

the centrality of wage labour in promoting social inclusion; the residual role of social provisions reduced to ensuring safety nets for the non-working population rather than to reduce dependence on the labour market; the construction of "poverty" in behavioural and psychological terms functional to advocating the poor's responsibility, initiative and sacrifice as primary modes of emancipation; the opposition to state "handouts" presented

as perverted inducements to dependency and moral relaxation; the pre-eminence of work discipline and ethic as underlying conditions for effective citizenship; the use of community-based pseudo-traditional motifs to legitimize differential treatments between urban and rural areas, and between formal and informal economies. All these aspects, moreover, reveal the power and the importance... of morality and pedagogy in shaping scientific and policy elaborations of South Africa's "social question". In this regard, it has been noticed how the welfare policy of late apartheid and of the ANC government share the view that autonomy and independence are essentially a prerogative of the individual and that upliftment from poverty is ultimately a matter of self-activation on the market, towards which public policies play an essentially supportive and remedial role.

He also identifies a number of the primary aspects of the government's particular articulation of neoliberalism: the construction of wage labour (especially as a mediator of social inclusion, morality, emancipation, autonomy and independence) in opposition to notions of poverty (associated with dependency, moral relaxation and poor citizenship). Consider the following statement by President Mbeki in late 2003:

The Cabinet made the determination that the advances we have made with regard to the First Economy, during our first nine years of our liberation, have put us in a position to meet the objective fundamental to our strategic outlook, to reduce the numbers of those dependant on social grants, by enabling them to pull themselves out of poverty by engaging in gainful economic activity and exercising their right to human dignity (Mbeki, 2003c).

This 'strategic outlook' was reiterated at the launch of a discussion document, produced in response to a 'significant rise' in child support and disability grants, by Social Development Minister Zola Skweyiya:

While, on the one hand, the increase in beneficiary numbers represents the success of the awareness campaigns and proactive registration, on the other hand, this has given rise to the challenges of the sustainability of the programme, and the importance of giving South Africans the opportunity to enjoy the dignity of work," he said... Unlike most of government's poverty alleviation measures, the social assistance programme was not specifically designed with exit strategies for beneficiaries, other than a change in their living circumstances and income levels. A proactive and deliberate strategy to link social grant beneficiaries to opportunities for economic activity was lacking. "Consequently, an intolerable proportion of able-bodied poor South Africans, including caregivers of children receiving the child support grant, and those persons with disabilities capable of rehabilitation, continue to face particular barriers to entering into, remaining in and progressing in such employment (SAPA, 18 January 2007).

This discourse, centred on the 'dignity' of wage labour, is increasingly motivated by the 'social problem' of the dependency of the poor on the state. A primary task for the Department, therefore, becomes differentiating between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor (Seeking, 2008) and providing 'exit opportunities' to 'progress into employment' for those who are able. Barchiesi (2005:386) argues that

[t]he post-apartheid policy discourse has responded to the material collapse of wage labour as a condition for dignified existences with an aggressive reassertion of wage labour centrality as a mode of social inclusion. Instrumental to this development have been the use of expert knowledge in categorizing poverty as lack of employment, the recodification of poverty as a moral and behavioural construct in order to divide "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, the resumption of pseudo-traditionalist themes of colonial origins as a way to emphasise self-help and responsibility, and the stigmatization



of welfare “dependency” as a justification for the withdrawal of decommodified social provisions.

This, then, is where the EPWP, and its targeted ‘marginalised groups’, re-enter the picture. The political rationality of the programme articulates perfectly with the rationalities underpinning this discourse. Participants entering the programme are intended to stop claiming grants, ending one aspect of their dependency, and, as the result of the training and limiting of time they are eligible to participate in the programme, are rendered employable citizens no longer dependent on the state. This concomitantly addresses the other concern embedded in the EPWP’s conceptualisation, underpinned by the first/second economy discourse, that their marginalisation is ended by their integration into the formal/first economy<sup>36</sup>.

What are the implications of this for understanding the place of disability targets within the EPWP and WfW? As was outlined in the discussion of disability mainstreaming in Chapter 2, the ‘differentiated unity’ formed between neoliberal and transformative discourses (the ‘social model’ when regarding disability) acts to emphasise the importance of integrating disabled people into employment. This has two potentially negative implications: first, it individualises and depoliticises calls for mainstreaming and equal access, focusing assessments of the ‘employability’ of individual disabled people and the provision of specific interventions to overcome their ‘limitations’ (‘rehabilitation’ in Skweyiya quote above). The central concerns of the social model, the role of “education, transport, the built environment, access, ideology and culture” and the nature of work in constructing and perpetuating disability (Barnes, 2000: 444), have little place in this discourse. It is worth remembering that while these are expressed in concrete ways in the EPWP and WfW, this holds true for the wider political discourse of the first/second economy.

Second, connected to the previous point, it obscures the different sources of ‘marginalisation’ experienced by poor, disabled people. The ‘framing’ of poverty and disability using a common pair of signifiers (dependency, marginalisation) that are tackled with a single ‘governmental technology’ (the EPWP, WfW) provide little discursive ‘room’ for the recognition of and provision for different needs amongst the marginalised groups that are targeted. This argument is explored further in the next two empirical chapters. Finally, it is worth emphasising the implications of McCord’s (2004) criticism of the EPWP because they apply to neoliberally-inspired development efforts more generally. Supply-side interventions, which take as their target the problematic individual, do little to address the structural causes of inequality and unemployment and are therefore always, at best, partial or, at worst, they enable these systems to become further entrenched. However, when these interventions are conceptualised in the place of social assistance for ‘employable’ marginalised groups (a group I dubbed the ‘walking wounded’ in the section title), this may result in the double marginalisation of these individuals. They become too ‘employable’ to be supported by the state but not employable enough for a private sector that is still characterised by those barriers and prejudices that form an important part of their marginalisation.

## 4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has traced the intertwining of two of the primary ‘rationalities of rule’ that have defined the field of governance during Mbeki’s second term – neoliberalism and social transformation. These have been expressed most concretely in the first/second economy discourse that framed government development policy during this period. This discourse suggests that the marginalisation

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<sup>36</sup> Recalling, for example, Mbeki’s description of the importance of the programme: “that these workers gain skills while they work, and thus take an important step to get out of the pool of those who are marginalized” (Mbeki, 2003b)

of the poor is the result of their exclusion from the formal market and the limited role of the state is to make these problematic people employable.

Furthermore, the contradictions between these two underpinning rationalities have been expressed further entrenched in the conceptualisation and legislative framework of the primary 'government technology' produced by this discourse – the EPWP. The transformative intent of targeting and mainstreaming of marginalised groups, including 'people with disabilities', has to be reconciled with progressive aspects such as low wages and insecure employment.

Finally, this chapter has shown that the programme articulates neatly with discourses, emerging from questions about social security, that increasingly identify the 'dependency' of employable individuals on state grants. The EPWP provides a specific 'government technology' to address these concerns. The following chapter explores the dynamics as these wider discourses and policies become institutionalised and operationalised in the policies and practices of WfW.

University of Cape Town

## 5. 'Saving the world on a single budget'<sup>37</sup>: finding disability in the complexity of Working for Water

"The Working for Water programme is the most effective and efficient poverty relief instrument of Government."  
(The South African Department of Finance, May 2000)

"The Working for Water programme is the world's leading initiative to combat invading alien plants."  
(USA Secretary for the Interior, Mr Bruce Babbitt, to President Thabo Mbeki, February 2000)

The introduction to the 1999/2000 Working for Water (WfW) annual report begins with these two quotations, which reveal both the scale of the (realised) ambition and perhaps the most defining feature of the programme – its 'dual' environmental and social nature. Kader Asmal, the ANC's first Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), described it as "a programme that has grown from something of an afterthought, into one of the premier Poverty Relief initiatives of the Government" (WfW, 1999; cited in Budlender and Mbere, 2000: 59). The immense popularity of WfW, Woodworth (2006) argues, was illustrated by Kader Asmal being second most-voted-for candidate in the election of the ANC's National Executive Committee in 1997 (up from 19<sup>th</sup> in 1995). It has subsequently won 38 national and international awards (Muller, 2007) and, due to its visible successes, has become very influential in the development of a number of aspects of government policy - most prominently the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) (WfW, 2004; Parnell, Douglas and Boule, 2005).

This chapter will argue that there are three distinct, but interlinked, aspects to the formulation and success of WfW. First, while many policy narratives seek to frame and stabilise a particular understanding of a *social problem* (and thereby garner support for a particular solution), the WfW programme has built a great deal of its policy, and mobilised supportive 'communities of practice,' around a particular *solution* – the clearing alien vegetation. Second, this has enabled the programme to 'expand' this solution to attract and accommodate a range of different rationalities and discourses. For example, a number of environmental discourses (e.g. water security, biodiversity, restoring the 'productive' potential of land, environmental education) and social and economic discourses (e.g. poverty alleviation, rural development, support for marginalised groups, job creation, generating novel industries, positive economic spin-off effects) are all identifiable in the work of the programme. It is precisely this differentiated unity (Hall, 2003) that lies at the heart of the success of this programme. It is the articulation of multiple environmental and social discourses that has also enabled the programme to remain extremely responsive to shifting political rationalities and discourses. Another significant aspect of the multitude of discourses and goals that populate it is that failure in any one aspect of the programme gets 'drowned out' by its successes. Third, almost counterintuitively considering the previous points, it has been able to attract high levels of *political* support because it has shrewdly emphasised the delivery on a number of discrete, politically-attractive quantitative goals.

However, the variety of goals and discourses that crowd the programme are not all equally prioritised. The particular 'hierarchy of practice' that has emerged in the policies, systems and institutional design of the programme is the result of two divergent forces. The first is the strength of focus on the environmental outcomes of the programme, largely the result of its organisational positioning (within DWAF) and the fact that it was originated as an environmental project by environmental scientists. The second is the importance of achieving poverty alleviation goals, due

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<sup>37</sup> This phrase is a warning in an evaluation of the programme by Common Ground (2003) and a subtitle in an article by Wordsworth (2006).

largely to the fact that the majority of political and financial support stems from this aspect of the programme. This research suggests that the institutional and individual interests of staff in WfW in the environmental aspects of the programme has resulted in it has been far more systematically operationalised than the social aspects of the programme. However, there is also a visible 'hierarchy of practice' amongst the different aspects of the social side of the programme. The different facets of the social aspects of the programme are an expression of the wider shifting development discourses of the government, and the current hierarchy (an emphasis on 'person days of work' and 'training') is a reflection of the neoliberal first/second discourse identified in the previous Chapter.

This chapter begins with a brief description of the WfW programme. It will then argue that the ambiguity of WfW's environmental and social discourses are the source of its political success; finding form in two primary narratives that emerged from the senior staff of the programme – 'innovation' and 'delivery'. However, as Matland's (2005) ambiguity-conflict model suggests, this ambiguity has had a differentiated affect on the hierarchy of practice outlined above. The discourse coalition and institutional technologies developed by the environmental side of the programme has meant that the programme has been able to cultivate innovative and rich practice. The de-emphasising of the social side of the programme (beyond its original 'poverty alleviation' mandate which is achieved through the metric of 'working days') and the simultaneous proliferation of underdeveloped targets and interventions has resulted in paralysis. This chapter concludes by showing that the disability target is perhaps the most extreme expression of the 'disabling' effect of this cacophony of ambiguous discourses and targets.

## **5.1. Introducing Working for Water**

The story of Working for Water (WfW) begins with an argument being made by scientists and resource managers that a growing water supply and biodiversity crisis, caused by the rapid spread of 'invasive alien' vegetation, was looming by the early 1990s (van Wilgen, le Maitre and Cowling, 1998; Hobbs, 2004; Woodworth, 2006). Prof Karar Asmal, the ANC's first Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), and Dr. Guy Preston, his newly appointed adviser, recognized an opportunity to address this environmental concern by combining it with an emphasis that had been placed on Public Works Programmes in the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Guy Preston, the programme's originator and chairperson, describes the length and breadth of the institutional support it managed to secure:

There would be many reasons for the high profile and success of WfW. It has had strong political champions. Professor Kader Asmal made WfW possible, and was able to win the support of the then President Nelson Mandela as the Patron in Chief. Ministers Ronnie Kasrils and Buyelwa Sonjica have continued to champion from within DWAF, with significant support from the Ministers of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (Ministers Valli Moosa and Pallo Jordan, and now Marthinus van Schalkwyk) and Agriculture (Ministers Thoko Didiza and Derek Hanekom). The programme was principally funded initially through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (thanks to then Minister Jay Naidoo), and later the Poverty Relief allocation (thanks to Minister Trevor Manuel and Deputy Minister Gill Marcus, and National Treasury officials). This enabled the programme to take a broader perspective, arguing that this was government's money, and that it should not focus solely on the needs of DWAF (Preston, 2005: 89).

Since inception the programme has described its central goal as controlling Invasive Alien Plants (IAPs) to increase water resources, with a secondary goal of using labour-intensive methods to create employment and contribute to economic development (WfW, 1998; 1999; 2000; 2003). By 2003/4 their Annual Report had differentiated these two themes of impacts into six long-term goals:

1. Ecological  
To improve the ecological integrity of our natural systems through the prevention and control of invasive alien plants.
  2. Hydrological  
To enhance water security through the prevention and control of invasive alien plants.
  3. Agricultural  
To help to restore the productive potential of land and water through the prevention and control of invasive alien plants.
  4. Socio-economic empowerment  
To develop and enhance the socioeconomic benefits for participants, from preventing and controlling invasive alien plants.
  5. Economic development  
To develop and enhance the economic development benefits from preventing and controlling invasive alien plants.
  6. Institutional development  
To build an effective and efficient organisation that optimises cooperative government, partnerships, transformation, staff development and learning.
- (WfW, 2003/4: ii).

The structure and institutional positioning of WfW are vital to understanding the programme's successes as well as accounting for some of its continuing shortcomings and will therefore be recited in some detail. At the highest level WfW has a board of 12 national ministers to provide 'strategic leadership' to the programme with an Executive Committee (with representatives from seven departments; Muller, 2007: 50) which acts as the senior policy forum. The programme is jointly 'owned' by DWAF, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), and the Department of Agriculture because of the breadth of its mandate (WfW, 2004; Muller, 2007). Administratively, however, WfW has always been located within DWAF; initially within its Policy and Regulation Branch and then, after a DWAF-wide restructuring process in 2003, as a Region in the Ops branch (DWAF, 2002). It was also 'decentralised' after the restructuring process in 2003 – handing over the responsibility for implementation to regional project leaders.

The majority of policy is designed and promulgated by head office staff located in Cape Town. Head office is divided into a number of areas of responsibility which have been consolidated into four branches: implementation, scientific services, partnerships and corporate services. The implementation branch is divided into:

1. The technical unit, responsible for consolidating learning about the environmental aspects of the programme;
2. The training unit, responsible for designing and implementing training programmes; and
3. The social development unit, responsible for responding to social issues that arise amongst the workers of the programme (e.g. high HIV/AIDS rates) and ensuring that recruitment targets of marginalised groups are met.
4. Regional project managers, located in regional DWAF offices in each province, also fall under the responsibility and guidance of this branch.

The scientific services branch is responsible for the programme's planning, monitoring and evaluation, and research. The partnership branch coordinates with other government departments and civil society programmes as well as overseeing the programme's secondary industries. 'Secondary industries' describes a number of initiatives which use the wood produced by WfW to construct goods that can be sold (e.g. furniture, coffins etc). Finally, corporate services is responsible for the administrative aspects of the programme (e.g. human resources, finance and

legal) as well as its communication and education units, which are responsible for the dissemination of the WfW 'message' (through events such as 'Weed Busters Week').

Head office staff are largely restricted to setting policy and monitoring its impact through the programme's accountability mechanisms (e.g. reporting and national forums). The implementation of the programme is most directly coordinated by the regional project managers in each province. It is their responsibility either to directly run projects or, more frequently, to identify local 'implementing agents' whose mandate overlaps with WfW or initiate regional partnerships with government departments. For example, the inclusion of a WfW project in a municipality's IDP, or working with South African National Parks (SANParks) clearing alien vegetation on park owned land. While the partnership unit may produce national partnerships for the programme, it is largely the responsibility of regional project managers to initiate and maintain projects with the provincial and local representatives of these departments

## 5.2. 'Bureaucratic entrepreneurship': the role of ambiguity, innovation and delivery in the political success of WfW

I'm busy reading Mamphela Ramphele's new book *Laying the Ghost to Rest* and one of the things she says about our democracy is that we actually aren't as mature as we pretend to be and I think the same would go for WfW. We probably aren't as far along as we think we are. There are lots of little steps that we have bypassed along the way that we could have learned from that we didn't. Now there's no way we can say if we had followed all of the steps would we have been where we are right now? But I think maybe from an institutional perspective there's still a lot of growing and a lot of learning that we can do. But in terms of our *innovation* I like to think that there are few programmes in the world that could beat us, or for *our ability to get programmes off the ground*. There are few institutions in this country who can beat us for coming up with an idea, getting funding for it. So again we might not be as far along as we always think we are but we have made strides that we might not been able to make if we had followed a normal growth path. We must also realise that WfW grew, WfW was established under abnormal circumstances. You know, there was this big rush post-1994 to get things off the ground and if you look at most of the other programmes that started off at that time most of them haven't made it whereas WfW has and it's precisely because we have been innovative, *because we've almost embodied the notion of Business Unusual that we've managed to do this* (Thando, 06/10/2007; added emphases).

Invoking the title of the State of the Nation speech delivered by President Mbeki in 2008, this project leader indicates the two strong narratives that structure the way in which senior staff conceptualise the success of the programme: its innovative capacities and a strong sense of the importance of 'delivery' (the ability of the programme to plan and implement programmes effectively). The narrative begins with the 'abnormal circumstances' that brought it into being, explaining their need to innovate and focus on delivery, and concludes with their successes ('there are few programmes in the world that could beat us'). To give another example, Guy Preston (2005) describes the success of the programme:

The direct links to political decision-making, and the fluidity of the operations in the early years, led to quick successes. The programme has spent an average of 98% of its budget over the past nine years, never slipping below 90% of its budget within a financial year (easily the best performance of any major programme of government since democracy)... It created work opportunities in the early years when there was so much pressure on government to deliver on employment, and was one of the highest profile programmes in this respect... The programme has produced its own annual report, has had the authority to respond directly to issues in the media, and has been quick to engage the support of national experts to argue its case in times of

need. It has also had very good international branding, being hailed as a role-model programme by a variety of prestigious organisations, institutions and individuals (Preston, 2005: 89-90).

A number of common element stand out – an emphasis on ‘quick successes’, illustrating its success in ‘delivery’, and an emphasis on its ‘branding’ as a ‘role model’ for other organisations both in South Africa and internationally. Public administration theorists have dubbed this form of organisational leadership and aggressive positioning to maximise opportunities ‘bureaucratic entrepreneurs’ (Teske, and Schneider, 1994; Schneider *et al.*, 1995). Baez and Abolafia (2002: 252) explain that these bureaucratic “[e]ntrepreneurs are known for their skill as innovators, for their keen understanding of the dynamics of organizational change, and for their creativity in advocating solutions to policy problems.” This certainly seems to describe the type of narrative cultivated in WfW.

An important part of the success of such a model is the designation and pursuit of politically attractive metrics (visible in Preston's description of projects pending). For example, drawing from an annual report:

During the 2002/3 financial year, the Working for Water Programme achieved the following:

- Full budget spent within the financial year.
- 21 754 people employed.
- 2 986 972 person-days of work and training completed.
- 55% of work went to women.
- 24% of work went to youth.
- 1% of work went to the disabled.
- 266 497 hectares of invasive alien plants cleared.
- 523 618 hectares of invasive alien plants followed-up (WfW, 2003: 4).

These make compelling reading – its prowess as a ‘delivery’ agent is undeniable. And yet there is a tension that emerges with this focus on delivery and innovation (conceptualised as ‘coming up with an idea, getting funding for it’) between its wider, transformative discourses and the pursuit of a limited set of clearly defined quantitative targets<sup>38</sup>.

As has been discussed in the project description, another innovative aspect of the programme has been its ability to bring together a multitude of different institutional stakeholders. WfW has built a coalition of government and social partners by recognizing that their core business of ‘labour-intensive alien clearing’ both requires and creates the opportunity for the programme to take ‘a broader perspective’. The need (and potential) to address social and environmental problems has emerged as their practice has continued to evolve, slowly enlarging these partnerships. This support has ranged from institutional and legislative cooperation to getting concrete “by-in” in the form of time and resources from these ‘partner institutions.’ Table 3 represents the diversity of their partners by 2000:

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<sup>38</sup> Pretorius’ (2003: 10-11) makes a distinction between two types of ‘predicted consequences’ present in the government's policy making: those of a transformative, qualitative nature (e.g. “equity, equality, community participation, sustainability, integration, security, and the like”) and those far more qualitative goals relating to ‘basic standards’ (e.g. “one million low-cost houses by 2000”). He suggests that the political pressure for ‘delivery’ (and key capacity shortages) in the new South Africa often results in an undue emphasis on achieving quantitative goals at the expense of the qualitative transformation intended by the policy.

Partner Institution	Nature of the partnership	Outputs	Resources contributed
Department of Welfare	Ex-offender programme	200 ex-offenders placed	R672 000
	Creation and support to childcare facilities for children of workers	3 000 children supported	R3m
Department of Labour	Code of Good Practice for Public Works Programmes	Ministerial determination and code	Staff time
Department of Public Works	Code of Good Practice	Joint approach to community public works projects	Staff time
Department of Environmental Affairs	Working for Water Legislation Customs control	Joint Programme Invasive species Joint Programme	R30m Staff time
Department of Agriculture	Working for Water Legislation Customs control	Joint Programme CARA Joint Programme	R30m Staff time
Forestry Industry	Improving standards	Training, materials, equipment, transport, safety mentorship, education, role models, biocontrol, standards	Technical expert seconded to WfW R1m per annum clearing plantations and riparian zones
Chainsaw suppliers	Training	120 trained machine operators 40 trainers trained	Costs of the trainer
NGOs	Planned Parenthood Association.	Reproductive health programme	Staff time R2m from UNFPA
	People's Dialogue	Community savings groups	Staff time
	Nicro	Ex-offenders programme	Staff time

**Table 3: WfW partnerships with other agencies in 2000**  
(WfW, 2000; cited in Mullagee and Nyman, 2001: 30)

As a perfunctory analysis of any WfW annual report makes clear, it was both incredibly efficient at engaging and spreading the credit with a range of local and international partners and funders (WfW, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004). Drawing from Preston (2005) again:

There is no doubt... that partnerships have been pivotal in what WfW has been able to achieve. And yet it is also true to say that the partnerships that WfW has attempted to forge have been sub-optimal. In too many cases, WfW has done most of the work, leaving the partnership a somewhat one-sided affair... it is important to stress that so much has been achieved through taking a partnership approach — and particularly “on the ground” where operatives have simply gotten on with working together, in spite of some high-level problems. If “gestalt” (1+1=3) has eluded us somewhat, it is closer to being achieved. Working for Water and its partners have a substantial platform upon which to build (p. 92).

The programme, therefore, has invested significant resources in bolstering and maintaining a diverse set of institutional relationships and partners. However, as Preston (2005) points out, these have frequently faulted at the larger scales – the majority of ‘innovative’ partnerships emerge from



relationships 'on the ground'. Furthermore, this pursuit of departmental allies has arguably resulted in the proliferation of project goals and activities highlighted above. Given these high organisational costs for little programmatic return, how does one make sense of this aggressive pursuit of partners? The wider the programme can spread a political investment in its outcomes, the more robust and diverse the political support will be for the programme. This, then, is a concrete example of the bureaucratic entrepreneurship that has made the programme so effective.

The strength of this narrative creates the opportunity for the programme to be self critical – as the opening quotation puts it: 'there is still a lot of growing and a lot of learning that we can do but in terms of our innovation...' Macdonald (2004: 24) captures this dynamic in his description of a review conference WfW held in 2004:

Several of the papers presented in this session served to highlight the extraordinary difficulties that have characterized Working for Water's operating environment during its first nine fiscal years (1995/96 to 2003/04). These difficulties include no security of funding, uncertain mandates, and a lack of adequate management capacity... In fact, given all the operational obstacles we heard about during the symposium, it is almost miraculous that the programme has been able to achieve so much—to the extent that it is often cited as the (or at least one of the) most effective poverty eradication interventions in South Africa, and is recognized internationally as being a world leader in invasive alien plant control... The programme's rationale was judged to be sound, and its achievements rated as significant. However, critical areas needing improvement included accountability through the clarification of its mandate, and the fact that strategic and operation planning, and monitoring, were weak.

This begins to indicate the costs of this successful strategy. The pursuit of politically attractive options has meant that the project has remained largely reactive in its strategic planning and development of programmatic systems and tools:

I suppose where we started off not knowing very well strategically what it is we want to do. We never had this twenty year plan and saying this is how we are going to do it, this is the ideal structure we are going to work with, it was more just a matter of we have funds now, you know practically we can start here, and then lets see how it involves. It was applied management I suppose you can call it, and I think we're still sitting with that you know programme learning how to best fashion ourselves to the political structures that's available to us... (Ken, 24/04/2008).

The focus on rapid growth and the adoption of politically attractive targets and discourses, then, required a culture of 'applied management' to emerge – the innovation and delivery achieved by the programme belie deeper structural weaknesses, which have specific effects on its ability to achieve certain kinds of outcomes (particularly transformational outcomes). This is explored in more detail in the final section of this Chapter. One of the chief implications of the bureaucratic entrepreneurship described thus far is that a range of environmental and social discourses have become articulated within the programme. The underdevelopment of the programme's accountability and monitoring systems (especially, as we will see, on the social side of the programme) has meant that the content and relationship between discourses remains ambiguous within the programme. This ambiguity has driven the emergence of an informal 'hierarchy of practice' within the programme. The next two sections will briefly 'map' this hierarchy, ending with an analysis of the implications of this hierarchy for mainstreaming disability within the programme.

### 5.3. Competing policy goals: environmentalism versus poverty alleviation in WfW

Recitations of the WfW narrative invariably begin with the identification of an environmental problem, by environmental scientists, and the proposal of a 'technical initiative' that could have some very positive social effects:

Working for Water owes its success to many factors, but the reason it got going in the first place was almost entirely thanks to the scientific vision, dogged determination and communication skills of Guy Preston and other scientists, who managed to convince politicians of the importance of the issue. That combined with the political vision of Kader Asmal (former Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry), who saw the opportunity to link environmental, social and economic concerns in one programme, which was subsequently continued by Ministers Ronnie Kasrils, Valli Moosa and Thoko Didiza. But the political vision was based from the start on the scientific opinion that invasive alien plants reduced the amount of water flowing into the nation's water supplies (Hobbs, 2004: 502).

The first innovation of the programme, therefore, was to articulate environmental and conservation discourses, which had been largely associated with the white, middle-class during apartheid and so potentially face marginalisation given the array of priorities facing the new government, to specific economic and social discourses (Woodworth, 2006). The environmental biodiversity 'threat' of invasive aliens is expanded to the social and economic spheres and dealing with this threat creates the opportunity to address a range of 'social conditions that confront the poor and the marginalised'. Despite its consistent description of its practice as 'optimising' the labour and social opportunities of an environmental programme (i.e. it is first and foremost an environmental programme), its political and funding support is still largely based on its poverty alleviation potential thereby placing this goal at the centre of the programme's practice. Woodworth (2006: 37) discusses how the political priority of rolling out the programme (and maximising its poverty relief effects) meant that the programme initially lacked a strategic ecological plan:

[The] point that the socio-political priorities of the program clashed with its ecological priorities is telling. It is quite natural that a public works program, financed by the state's poverty alleviation fund, should direct its efforts to areas of greatest need. Understandably, too, there is political pressure in each locality for a slice of a popular initiative. But if Working for Water's priority is the eradication and control of invasive aliens, it would make much more sense to focus on those areas where infestation is most acute. "There is inevitably a clash," says [Guy] Preston. "We have worked where there is acute poverty; we have worked where there is unrest and violence, because we are a public works program dedicated to providing opportunities to the most disadvantaged people."

While this articulation serves a political purpose, as I have already argued, it creates a tension senior managers need to negotiate:

I don't think at a higher level that integration [between environmental and social goals] has also been accepted so readily, I think we're still having challenges in convincing our immediate [political] bosses that this kind of marriage is working for us. I think that this process we're trying to engage, they sort of bought into it in saying this is an easier way that we can defend these two areas that this programme is working but it hasn't been readily accepted. And I think that is also been translated into lower and middle management level where I think there's still a bit of iffy-ness about it, let's wait and ride this one out and see at the end of the day which one the conducive political climate would support better. I do know after Polokwane, we're talking a lot more about the poverty alleviation aspects and that's now coming on the forefront so we are going to have our work cut out keeping that marriage sort of going (Ken, 05/05/2008).

All of the managers I interviewed, as well as numerous references in the literature, reflect this difference in which discourses resonate at the different levels of the organisation: politicians are often interested in its potential for poverty alleviation, senior WfW officials in the environmental impact, with mid- and lower level managers largely required to navigate these currents.

For many senior WfW managers, coming from environmental backgrounds and/or careers in DWAF, the inclusion of the social responsibilities (which grew in response to the social challenges which emerged from the programme's practice e.g. high pregnancy rates) dilutes the core a mandate of the department:

*A more difficult aspect for some of the officials was the focus that WfW placed on its social responsibilities. Once again we argued that we are an integrated programme, and could not merely focus on the technical [environmental] aspects if there was not the capacity to deal with the social challenges of our beneficiaries (Preston, 2005: 89; my emphasis).*

However, the prioritisation of the environmental aspects of the programme over the social is reflected in the organisational structure at the regional level. Regional project managers are primarily responsible for meeting clearing and 'person days of work' targets, with training and social development goals (the purely social aspects of the programme) the responsibility of a regional training and social development staff member<sup>39</sup>. As Thando (25/05/2007) explained to me, this is pragmatic necessity:

It's a very challenging job being a project manager. We did an analysis of our standards that we've developed if you're a good project manager on the natural resource side what of the areas and elements you need to be in control of? There are about 611 elements and I think there's no way in hell that any one project manager... I think they still have to be born that are able to really have a good handle on all of those areas because it touches on just about everything and then linking it with this other bell and whistle that's got its own set of challenges. So perhaps as the programme we have to think seriously about how we are actually deploying capacities to do the implementation perhaps you do need two project managers, one dealing with your beneficiaries and one dealing with your natural resources management side at the end of the day because at the moment it's a bit too personal how each of those kind of areas are being [inaudible] if he's good on the social side he's naturally going to put more attention into it, similar with natural resources. So I think that the other aspect that we are grappling with now; the structure we have opted for in the past and how we manage our implementation at a project level that perhaps needs to be revisited.

[Do you know why it ended up coming about like that?]

Well, I think perhaps just from a practical perspective the whole organisational structure and the process to get positions, appointments you had to have this whole hierarchy organogram and it just made sense you're going to have a project manager and a going to manage the budget, I think the elements of what that entailed weren't really thought through but at the time it looked like it made sense. Afterwards they said okay in addition to the project manager a region should

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<sup>39</sup> This is aggravated by the social development manager responsible for servicing a region (while each project has their own manager focusing on the clearing and employment targets): 'Yes, although the way it is structured currently the social coordinator and training coordinator almost responsible for the entire region. Whereas the project manager is like a client of these support people. So I think an added complexity creeps in there because in a sense you want the project level sort of implementation practices to be managed by this project manager, the people who are meant to support it are looking at the whole region as a whole and ideally just in terms of sense they would really be your monitoring, regulatory type of focus. And I think that's perhaps another element of where this thing is misfiring is coming from; the structure doesn't support an effective implementation and roll out of a lot of our kind of high vision type of objectives and so revisiting that structure is important again' (Ken, 05/05/2008).

have a social coordinator, a region should have a training coordinator and they just sort of afterwards came into play. But how those things integrate is as well [Ja, another thing] personal level of interaction between different people in the region.

He argues that the current structure is a result of the 'applied management' process that has characterised much of WfW's development. The addition of 'a social coordinator' to the organisational structure at a later stage in the programme's development and their relative distance from 'implementation practices', therefore, creates an organisational structure which signals to local managers that environmental and employment targets form the core of the programme's practice. The social 'side' of the organisation (training and social development) remains relatively marginalised.

The other important aspect of the quotation above is the vivid description of the pressure that project managers are under – 'I think they still have to be born that are able to really have a good handle on all of those areas'. As he points out, organisational design and the 'development of standards' are important mechanisms for a head office to 'deploy capacities to do the implementation'. These are the 'nuts and bolts' of governmentality because they bring to bear 'expert knowledges' that structure the practice of the programme:

[P]roblems do not exist in themselves. They become known through grids of evaluation and judgment about objects that are far from self-evident. ... [T]he study of government involves the examination not only of normative principles derived from political philosophy but also of the expertise and know-how of policymakers and specialists of various sorts, including academics, economists, accountants, psychologists, bureaucrats, social workers, law enforcement officers and so on. Government exists in the medium of thought, of mentalities and rationalities of government (Dean and Hindess, 1998: 9).

The practice of planning seeks to present "as an intelligible field with specifiable limits and particular characteristics...whose component parts are linked together in some more or less systematic manner by forces, attractions and coexistences" (Rose, 1999: 33) in order to influence programme managers by acting as a grid for their perception and evaluation (Foucault, 1991b: 81). Using his example, the process of defining 611 elements 'on the natural resource side' that a programme manager has to be 'in control of' constructs a very specific field of action; likely to be rendered even more compelling by the pressure that it creates. That is, such a long to-do list means a manager has far less time or 'mental space' to perform additional duties. This process represents a central mechanism of governmentality – the systematisation of expert knowledges into concrete tools, incentives devices, recommended behaviours etc. A great deal of the research, and development of policy and management systems within WfW, has focused on the environmental aspects of the programme. For example, of the 54 papers presented at its inaugural research symposium in 2003, 38 related to elements of its environmental rationale (70%), 10 were concerned with operational management (19%), and 6 focused on its social development aspects (11%) (Macdonald, 2004). As Ken (05/05/2008) explains:

I think there's a wealth of science behind the whole natural resources side that we've walked a long distance with, and on the social science side I don't think we've been very fair in terms of developing those instruments effectively. So there is definitely a weakness there. But I think again it's really about marrying the two in a way that makes sense at the end of the day. I think the people that have been entrusted, they haven't been able to navigate that kind of area kind of I'm using the phrase elegantly again but it's the elegance that is core to how you manage this programme. There'll always be tensions, there will always be people fending for their particular territory but it makes so much sense if we just bring the two together and say look we are doing the same thing, you just need to do what you do well and you just need to do what you do well but at the end of the day the two should meet.

While trying to emphasise the interconnected nature of the programme's goals, the manager acknowledges a technical focus in the programme on developing the 'science' on the 'natural resources side'. He recognizes the tensions created by differing goals and suggests that the 'weakness' in the development of the 'social science side's' 'instruments' has been due to 'inelegant' management. Paul (30/05/2008) puts it in more stark terms:

Okay, look the way I see it if you look at the way we do our reporting for example, if you come to a typical WfW meeting, in an eight-hour meeting we will spend six hours talking about hectares and clearing and norms and so on, we will spend one hour talking about health and safety, training, social development all lumped together and then another hour to discuss when is the next meeting going to happen. I mean let's call a spade a spade if I was a regional manager or a regional programme leader and I had to prepare for one of those meetings I would leave social development, training, health and safety completely off and just concentrate on hectares because that's where I'm going to get the most flak. And again it could be because we just haven't had strong enough people driving social development at a national level, you know we just haven't had the same, we just haven't had the same drive as the technical people. And if you look at the technical side we've got people who have been here for 10 years plus, they really developed with the programme, they know which questions to ask. On the social development side I mean really you're reinventing the wheel every year and a half. So from our side we still haven't given the necessary guidance whereas on the technical side there has been a lot of drive from those people to make sure that they get the clearing side correct.

Both managers emphasise the failure of social science managers to formulate policy and influence practice through the creation of appropriate reporting 'instruments'. As he suggests, this would seem to be in no small part because of the high turnover of social science staff, and the relative experience of the natural resource staff.

... it's interesting if you look at the national office make up again I think with the kind of competencies we have at present the emphasis is really on the natural resource management side again. So perhaps in a microcosm it is the kind of split we are seeing also that is adding to this breakdown in relations between the national office and the regional office and until such time as we balance them out and have enough competencies on the social science side as well. But perhaps that is also an indicator that we haven't been effective at the national policy level at articulating what those social science policy and objectives are meant to be and bringing in the right people to drive it because frequently I think if you look at our social science position at the national office the most musical chairs you know they come and go. It's really just a stepping stone, it's nice to be associated with Working for Water because of all these kind of kudos and good stuff that it is doing and they realise that hang on there's a still a lot to be done perhaps I'm meant to be doing it elsewhere ((laughs)) (Sophie, 24/05/2008).

Ken (05/05/2008) explains the implication of such high turnover for the social science 'side':

Well the social development post it's been around for about 10 years, we've worked it out that I am the eighth incumbent. So it means that people are staying on average for just over a year. It isn't enough time to you to grow in the post. I've been in the post now, or I've been you look now for just over a year and even with my honours in anthropology and my honours in EGS, with six years in the programme I am only now starting to find out what the post is actually about. Whereas somebody who comes in from the cold, who doesn't even have the WfW context, who might not have the theoretical basis for me doesn't, in a year can't achieve anything. That's partly why we are in the position that we are in because we've made such interesting appointments.

However, a response to a question probing the weakness of the social side in the programmes monitoring and evaluation ‘instruments’ reveals that this ‘natural resource’ focus is located at a particular ‘strata’ of the organisation:

[I've noticed, using the POS (Project Operating Standards) as one example that you've got 120 little tick boxes and about 10 of them have to do with social elements. Just in terms of reporting weight you, there's very little pressure on you to pay too much attention to the social side of things.]

Ja. Ironically, now that I've been acting I've been sitting on national fora for the department and the only thing that the department wants from us is employment stats, how many women, how many this, how many people have been... so what the department wants is completely social and economic. They almost don't care how many hectares we've cleared, it's as if we're running a make work programme. But if you look at the way we manage, what we're chasing is hectares.

Interviewer: that is DWAF who is asking you those things?

Yes (Thando, 24/04/2008).

Despite being located in The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, then, the political capital to be gained from WfW has to do with its social and economic effects. As the programme's originator and chairperson, Guy Preston, has put it:

There is no doubt that the ability of WfW to create jobs in areas of poverty was a prime reason for its rapid growth, more than a full appreciation of the massive threat of invasives. (Indeed, we have had to stress to staff that we are WfW, and not some other programme, because we clear invasive alien plants, and this remains the main goal of the programme) (Preston, 2004: 90).

This sentiment is reflected in my interviews as well:

Interviewer: I was wondering at almost an organisational culture level do you think the majority of people at Working for Water think about themselves as being part of a poverty relief program or as a biodiversity/environmental programme?

I think if you look at the regional implementers still very much the poverty alleviation sort of label is what sits a lot more easier with them. I think there's perhaps an aura that has been created around that level of ‘we are here to deal with poverty’ and it buys you I would almost call it street cred if you go out to these grass roots level engagements. This is the programme that is offering employment to people and it's very easy to be shackled with that label and to stand up and say that's me. Whereas the natural science thing, it's almost like it's good to have but it doesn't really kind of get that kind of laurels from the street (Thando, 06/10/2007).

Considering the political capital and the ‘street cred’ available for the social goals of the programme, how can we explain ‘the way we manage, what we're chasing is hectares’? Why would those aspects of the programme's practice that result in such ‘kudos’ remained so “undermanage[d]” (Preston's word - Woodworth, 2006: 39)? I would like to suggest that this best understood by the importance of ‘discourse coalitions’<sup>40</sup> (Hajer, 1995) in policy formulation and implementation in

<sup>40</sup> In a comparison between Sabatier's ‘advocacy coalition framework’ and Hajer's critique and proposal of a ‘discourse coalition’ approach Fisher (2003: 113) explains: “It is, as Hajer illustrates, narrative storylines rather than policy beliefs and empirical evidence that drive institutional practices and the advocacy argumentation process. Problematizing the idea that analysis should be rooted in individuals with their own well formulated belief systems, it seeks to understand how individuals interact with other individuals to create webs of meaning with which they can make sense of a complex reality... Whereas empiricists sees the politics of discourse as a mere expression of power resources through language, discourse analysis recognizes that

organisations. Somewhat counterintuitively, it is precisely because of the strong articulation of the programme social goals with wider discourses that senior managers have felt the need to build and strengthen a discourse coalition around its environmental goals – a group of scientists and managers independent of and within the organisation gathering a ‘wealth of science’ so that ‘they know questions to ask’. On the other hand, the ‘commonsensical’ appeal of the social goals has meant that a coherent discourse coalition has not had to emerge – the social discourse(s) articulate with wider discourses so effectively they have not require a consolidated set of ‘instruments’ and ‘science’ to interpolate WfW staff (i.e. convince them to meet these targets). This lack of consolidation, however, is not without consequence. The complex unity of different developmental discourses that WfW represents is marked by its ambiguity and heterogeneity – resource distribution, job creation, social development, training, entrepreneurship, economic development. This makes the programme attractive to a range of people. However, Foucault's central insight in the notion of governmentality was the translation of the rationalities of rule, and the expert knowledges they construct, into “the specific and contingent assemblages of *practices, materials, agents and techniques* through which these rationalities operate to produce governable subjects” (Hart, 2004: 92). Without the consolation of the ‘will to rule’ into the ‘technologies of government’ (through, for example, the system of learning from local innovation envisaged by Matland (1995)), the potential for the governmentality effects envisaged by the social development and entrepreneurial discourses is substantially curtailed (Rose and Miller: 1992, 193).

The lack of consolidation was initially because of the limited research conducted by the programme into its social aspects but after the programme review and research symposium in 2003 the programme has commissioned research by external consultants into various aspects of the social side of the programme (focusing primarily on gender, exit strategies and the social impacts of the programme). However, in a more recent presentation to a portfolio committee of Parliament, WfW identify this as a weakness of the social side of the programme: “Research results and recommendations that are not unpacked and utilized for and by the entire programme” (WfW, 2007). The failure of the social side of the programme, therefore, has been the translation of this knowledge (largely generated by external actors) into a system of governmentality which specifies ‘what is to be done’ (e.g. management guidelines) and ‘what is to be known’ (e.g. monitoring and evaluation) (Foucault, 1991b). This has resulted in the variability expected from an experimental implementation programme (Matland, 2005) but when combined with the relative strength of the environmental aspects of the internal reporting systems of the programme described above<sup>41</sup> it has created the opportunity for the social goals to be reduced to meeting numerical targets:

[This is that something that has interested me in particular ... to your mind is there potential conflict between these goals, between managing at an implementation level all of these...]

... again, linked to that competency aspect, that probably speaks to a lot of implementation managers they still haven't managed to marry these two long-term impacts in a elegant way. It boils down to I can do, look, I can do the natural management very well but this social stuff come on man it's just not my cup of tea, I'll report on it occasionally but I know what I do well is this and this is what I'm going to focus on (Ken, 05/05/2008).

The transformative potential of many of the social targets, then, are potentially emptied by the failure of the programme to convert this into ‘usable’ knowledge (i.e. to standardise ways of doing

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narratives go beyond the expression of existing resources to structure the very fields of action itself, positioning the relevant actors and the selective employment of discourses and the modes of argument.”

<sup>41</sup> Particularly the passage: ‘if I was a regional manager or a regional programme leader and I had to prepare for one of those meetings I would leave social development, training, health and safety completely off and just concentrate on hectares because that's where I'm going to get the most flak’ (Thando, 24/04/2008).

and knowing<sup>42</sup>). Indeed, Sophie (24/05/2008) points out that even where policy has been developed it has not been translated into practice:

WfW, we would have our policies which would then have to be translated into guidelines, orientation plans and business plans if I understand you correctly. [I: Ja, Ja]. I think at the national level, at the policy level a lot has been developed but we haven't necessarily decentralised it. So again the whole concept of decentralising the programme to the regions, we haven't necessarily closed the loop. So we have a whole lot of stuff sitting at national office, we've got a whole lot of policies, goals, you know all of those things sitting at national level which we haven't necessarily followed through to regional level. Now I know there are a lot of policies that we still need to develop at national level but even the ones that we have developed aren't necessarily being implemented.

Translating policy intent into concrete tools which can be used to influence decision-making of 'street-level bureaucrats' is an essential mechanism in achieving congruence between the micropolitical forms of government and the higher agendas of the state. This is significant when considering the three wider discourses used to envisage the impact of the programme: while *poverty alleviation*<sup>43</sup> may be achieved without a coherent regime of practice, the *entrepreneurial* and *transformative discourses* are premised on a specific form of intervention in the lives of participants<sup>44</sup>. The absence of specific tools to guide these processes makes their translation into practice extremely unlikely.

The 'complex unity' formed by the environmental and social discourses in WfW have served to strengthen the political position of the programme. However, the balance of forces within the programme are undoubtedly lined up behind its environmental aspects, exemplified by the development of environmental 'governmental technologies' (a systematic research programme and an accompanying set of technical tools and techniques which seek to ensure the compliance of middle- and lower-level managers). In contrast, the weakness and diversity of the social discourses of the programme has meant they have remained underdeveloped, with negative consequences for transformative potential of the programme.

#### **5.4. Unweaving the social threads: understanding the 'hierarchy of practice'**

The hierarchy of practice *within* the social aspects of the programme that has emerged is largely an expression of the underpinning political rationalities – neoliberalism and transformation. The particular discursive expression of these rationalities, however, has shifted since the programme's conception: from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), to the Growth, Redistribution and Employment (GEAR), to the formation of the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP). The programme's initial success was due to its ability to (1) connect with the discourse of the RDP, (2) access funding through the RDP (later the Poverty Relief Fund) and spend it reasonably efficiently, (3) establish a political presence before the 'non-negotiable,' polarising announcement of GEAR in 1996 (as a visible counterexample to accusations that the government was not doing

<sup>42</sup> Indicated in the passage: 'it's not followed through, you know it's easy to tie in with the vision but...that's when you realise there has been a breakdown in that I think that kind of people who have been tasked with pushing it through we haven't sort set up a clear agenda in terms of what is the policy trying to do other than just reporting on the statistics' (Ken, 05/05/2008).

<sup>43</sup> This is achieved primarily through the injection of resources in poor areas through the creation of the short-term jobs WfW creates.

<sup>44</sup> These are meant to be achieved either by shaping them into 'entrepreneurs of themselves' or influencing power relations in communities.



enough to address poverty) and (4) ultimately serve as the model for the government's EPWP with its turn to the developmental state discourse.

As the result of these rationalities and discourses there are two sets of social targets: on the one hand, the recruitment of targeted, marginalised groups, and other social development interventions (e.g. crèches), which the programme refers to as social development, and, on the other, training, and the exiting of participants into formal employment. The introduction of these social targets into programmes policy the largely corresponds to the evolution of development discourses identified above. The first two were conceptualised at the beginning of the project, while a focus on training and acting as a 'bridge' to the formal economy was introduced after the market-driven logic of GEAR had begun the normative position within the South African government.

The initial conceptualisation of WfW as a public works programme included the targeting of marginalised groups. Setting specific quantitative targets was both very much in line with the way in which the RDP had been articulated (e.g. setting specific numerical targets) and responded to the ever increasing pressure on government to account for and quantify its service delivery (e.g. for improved governmentality). However, as Muhammad (06/10/2007) explains, these have been formulated and implemented in the absence of a coherent plan about the wider impact that the programme should have on these groups and the communities they come from:

I was explaining to [withheld] these targets, they didn't come out of any good science or anything else. You know, it's in the RDP so the RDP is talking about the need for us to still have, but it didn't have percentages and I mean [withheld] had a meeting last week when I was raising this about youth that we set 20% youth, which is government policy now, but I'm the one who actually set that and I know that there was no good thought put into it. And, you know, I was really trying at the time to get good advice from, thinking maybe that somebody knew about how do you balance off the needs of the youth and older people, and families and power relations and all of these things, I was terribly concerned about, but I really didn't find anyone who said anything that made me think oh that's a good idea. So it was a completely ridiculous figure and then made even more ridiculous when they made youth up to 35 ((laughter)). Gender had a bit more logic to it in that 50% or just over 50% are women and if you want to correct an imbalance you have to go out, and we said it would be based on wages and not numbers but I have been arguing that, in fact, when you go far above that you could actually have quite negative social implications and again I'm sure that [a gender expert] or somebody with that sort of insight would pretty much say the same thing. But you know we are in the populist stage of things right now. And the same applies to disability, but the problem that applies to disability, that's not the problem with gender and marginally the problem with the youth, is defining what is it and I mean we set it at 2% because that is what we were told at the time was the kind of proportion of people who have disabilities but it was, what do they mean by disabilities that mattered? [No, absolutely.] So, anyway, then it went to 5% but 5% was implicated in being unimplementable, and some people were disputing it...

The initial insertion of these targets, then, was largely to serve as a placeholder (presumably until some further work had been done) to ensure that these groups benefited from the programme. As the quote indicates, these targets, including the original percentages, have now become government policy – legislated in the frameworks that set up the EPWP. However, the lack of strategic content or definitional clarity ('what do they mean by disability?') has rendered these aspects of WfW practice and issue of compliance, rather than of transformative practice. Senior staff were aware of this trend but had little tangible to offer in the way of further suggestions. For example:

Look I think those kind of targets, thumbsuck targets of 60% women, 20% youth, 2% disabled is still very much something that EPWP hasn't engaged to tell you the honest truth. The kind of interventions they need to make to make meaning of those numbers. I

mean if you ask [withheld] he'll tell you he just dreamt it up one night late when he had to put something together. I suppose with the lack of anything clearly directional it probably makes a lot more sense than nothing at all. But I think that that sort of equity targets is still something that we engage with a lot more. It needs to be informed a bit better about what is actually the kind of meaningful targets that we want to be pursuing. It made sense us and I think you can make good arguments for saying why you pursue each of those particular targets *but there is another level of complexity that we're not even touching on* (Thando, 24/04/2008).

Soon after the programme began, however, it expanded the social development aspects of its practice in response to operational issues that arose:

For example, when Working for Water had clearing teams camping out in the Soetkraal area above the Tsitsikamma National Park, we found that only 16 of the 120 workers were women (13%, instead of the target of 60%). Of those 16 women, nine had unplanned pregnancies within the first year. Together with the Department of Social Development, the community and other partners, we initiated a Sexual and Reproductive Health programme, and have reduced the percentage of unplanned pregnancies by 85%, among what are now 73 women in 123 workers in the area. We have been a catalyst in the building of a crèche-cum-multipurpose centre in the feeder settlement, and have worked with the authorities to ensure that we do what we can to build a better life for all those with whom we engage. Some would argue that even though it did not cut down invasive trees in the short-term, it could help to cut down more invasive trees in the long-term (Preston, 2005: 88).

These forms of initiatives were expanded from local innovations to national initiatives: "This led to a strong social development focus, not only in the targeting of the marginalised (by race, gender, disability, age, geographic locality and poverty status, including single-parent households), but also in providing support in terms of social development needs like life skills, sexual and reproductive health support, child-care and even the provision of crèches in the early years of the programme" (Preston, 2005: 89). And the programme set up capacity at head office to coordinate and manage these various initiatives.

However, the introduction of the GEAR shifted the emphasis of governance throughout state structures. There was a growing interest in the programme because it represented a way to pursue a poverty alleviation agenda but, in contrast to social grants, had the potential to produce wider economic and entrepreneurial benefits:

Public Works Programmes (PWPs) have changed their role and status in sub-Saharan Africa, moving from short-term emergency relief to permanent features of anti-poverty and job-creation strategies. In South Africa this took place in the context of government adopting both an anti-poverty approach and a neo-liberal economic framework. The result has been intense pressure on all 'welfarist' interventions, including PWPs, to 'prove' their worth in economic as well as social terms (Strategy & Tactics, 2000; cited in PSC, 2007: 58).

This was expressed in WfW with a shift in emphasis within the programme from job creation for the marginalised towards a growing interest (in the reporting of WfW) about the training workers receive, the formulation of an 'exit strategy' once they leave the programme and identifying opportunities for 'secondary industries' (e.g. using the wood of the alien trees to produce a variety of products) (WfW, 2003; WfW 2004; WfW, 2007). "Individuals are employed on WfW as either contractors or workers for a maximum of 24 months in a cycle of five years. After this period, it hopes to design a strategy that ensures that beneficiaries that exit WfW do so with sufficient skills and resources to get other sources of income" (Research Surveys, 2004: 1). A central plank in this exit strategy was the development of contractors who would be employed by WfW:

The programme introduced a contractor scheme, which sought progressively to 'wean' people off a daily wage approach to work, initially through piece work (where workers are paid for pre-defined 'pieces' of work, such as an area to be cleared), then closed contracts (where contractors are hired without tendering on the open market), to the final stage of independent contractor. This scheme puts people living within an area identified for clearance of invasive alien plants in a position to apply for contract work, and develops business skills (Magadlela and Mdzeke, 2004: 95).

The emphasis in the training of the contractors is providing them with the skills they need to be competent employees of and employers for WfW with a strong focus on entrepreneurial and small-business skills. Workers undergo training to be able to perform their duties in the programme (e.g. chainsaw operating, herbicide application), health and safety and first aid training (necessary for safe WfW employment but arguably also transferable) and a range of 'social development' training (e.g. HIV/AIDS education, life skills, 'personal finances'). The success of the training and the provision of a workable exit strategy have so far proven elusive (Goldin, 2003; Research Surveys, 2004; CASE, 2007; WfW, 2007).

To enable these processes WfW created a separate unit at head office to formulate the policy and tools for implementation that would be needed:

Initially when WfW started off training and social development were lumped as one portfolio. As the programme has developed there was a need to split the posts. What you find at the regional level is that the posts are still combined so you find that your regional coordinators store your training and social development coordinators. Which to an extent makes sense but the downside is because training has such specific goals and such specific activities, in most regions training takes preference over social development. At national office, like I said it used to be one unit and then was split and now when I started off I felt that the separation was a bit too far and now working with the training manager I've been trying, we've been trying to pull some of it back together because training itself is a social development intervention [absolutely]. So we need to be working a lot closer at national level, ironically at provincial level we need to split it. So there's that dichotomy that we currently sit with that at national level we were almost going in separate directions, and at provincial level some of that was part of the confusion. The fact that one warm body, sitting in one post, getting instructions from two different people who were moving into separate directions. So what you would find is that over the past five years training has really gone forward in leaps and bounds, social development on the other hand really has a lot of ground to make up (Ken, 05/05/2008).

There are two important sets of issues here: first, WfW has separate but connected institutional structures which reflect a wider dichotomy in the discourses of government about how to address poverty, development and disability. In addition, reflecting wider priorities of government, constructing a 'regime of practice' around the training goal has been prioritised over social development.

Second, the institutional design of WfW (particularly at regional level) has meant that this prioritisation of training is likely to be replicated in the decision-making of regional staff:

[Again, it's probably problematic to generalise here, what do you think those [regional social development] managers spend the majority of their time doing?]

Our training and social development managers? [Ja]. Training work. We had an assessment done last year and it found that on a weekly basis the training and SD manager spent between 80 to 90% during training.

[In terms of what those coordinators would report, what kind of deliverables are they responsible for? How do they report to head office?]

Well there's a standard reporting template and what I find the use for training they report on their activities and what has been achieved. For social development they report on the more broader programme activities. So they would for example report on employment stats, they would report on the number of contractors that they have, you know more broader things, advisory committees and so on but that they know are still part of their ambit.

[Do you find that split problematic?]

Uhh, not necessarily. I mean obviously I would like them to get more involved in the social development side and to think more about some of the social interventions we could have to make a more enabling environment for our beneficiaries but it's not always... given the current situation we have I don't think it's practical.

[In terms of them carrying both portfolios?]

I just don't think it's practical (Paul, 30/05/2008).

The hierarchy visible between the environmental and social aspect of the programme, therefore, replicated *within* the social aspects of the programme – training takes priority over social development (particularly its more transformative elements). However, this is not to say that the training and contracting aspect of the programme have been fully fleshed out:

At the moment I think a weak spot of ours has been that rapid movement from a daily wage, overall everybody gets benefits, to a contract business. It's been a very rapid move towards that and I think part of the challenges we are seeing now is that it's the contractor himself as one person to perhaps get most of the benefits, and the team – the notion of the beneficiary has given way, has been weaned down a bit. Which is why we are trying to work with EPWP now, they've got the formal contracting development programme, you know, that work on the roads and all of these more public works type of initiatives. But where they had actually gone through it saying 'how do we really formalise the development of a contracting business?' Where you can specify it's the team that needs to be developed but each member of that team is sort of a marketable entity in his own right and we haven't followed through that contract model I think very well. I think what we did at initially is because we're lazy. Instead of wanting to manage 20,000 beneficiaries individually, we said, 'hey we can only deal with one contractor which is about a 10th of the people we need to deal with.' But it came at a price I think. So we need to kind of revisit that now and what EPWP was trying to do was also try to link it with a way to exit. If you have a formal contracting business model, I would call it almost more of an organic process instead of from the word go saying you were going to be a contractor and this is how you are going to work and you are letting sort of different models emerge from the sort of interventions you make perhaps it will be a little more, the benefits will be spread a bit wider (Thando, 06/10/2007).

Visible here, then, is the impact of the first/second economies discourse – the 'rapid movement' towards a contractor model driven by the underpinning neoliberal governmentality. However, as the Thando points out, this model raises a range of ethical and logistical challenges for the programme because it effectively outsources the labour for the individual projects. It therefore has far less control over those organisational processes that are vital for its more transformative outcomes. Nonetheless, a number of the managers drew on the discursive structure of the first/second economy discourse to describe the intended social impacts of the programme:

[What kind of impact you think WfW should have on an individual?]

Now that's an impossible question. It really is a difficult question. Let me try and answer it as best I can. For me what we have to look at is firstly by providing employment, the first thing we offer is employment, for me before we offer skills, before we offer an income, the biggest thing we offer people is employment because linked to employment is self worth, linked to employment is a sense of purpose, linked to employment is a sense of well-being. So just from the fact that somebody has a routine and that they can get up in the morning and have somewhere to go, already there's a social impact. Then secondly there's the economic impact that we have to have. So this is not just a nice-to-have, it's also an economic development programme. I would also like to think that WfW needs to teach entrepreneurial skills which, the question of whether you can or can't is debatable. And then of course WfW also needs to have a very specific the impact on the skills level of the people that we work with because by definition expanded public works is also about skills development. So if you look at the individual and the impact that we have to have on the individual. We have to look at promoting a good self worth through employment, through economic development and through skills development (Ken, 05/05/2008).

This closing sentence captures the discursive heart of this neoliberal inspired discourse – it is about aligning a sense of self-worth with one's economic identity. This, however, depoliticises the process of development, framing the individual and their lack of skills the problem. This, as has been outlined in the previous chapters, has negative consequences for the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the mainstreaming of disabled people in the programme. It is to these issues that we now turn.

## 5.5. Looking for the disability mainstreaming agenda

The WfW programme has certainly drawn on the transformative rationalities and discourses outlined in the previous chapter to describe the social impact it intends to have on participants. For example, it aims to have

...a marked influence on employment opportunities, training and capacity building, community empowerment, social development, life-skill enhancement and “exit plans” for workers and other staff that can result the creation of sustainable employment opportunities. of particular note is its work to focus on the most marginalized – the poorest of the poor, rural communities, women, the disabled, youth, single-parent households, ex-offenders, those living with aids, and the children of its workers (Working for Water, 2002a).

A number of these marginalised groups were identified through the various partnerships that WfW developed over the years (e.g. ex-offenders – NICRO) but disability targets were included from its first conception – reportedly at the insistence of Kader. However, the programme has consistently failed to meet its disability targets (e.g. WfW, 1999-2004). As has already been outlined, this research was originally motivated by a disability mainstreaming policy produced by WfW, which they called *Working on Capability*, to respond to this trend. The project's business plan tells the story of its conceptualisation:

Since its inception... WfW has endeavoured to ensure that it provides opportunities for the disabled. When this was first mooted, under the leadership of the then Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Professor Kader Asmal, it was met with some scepticism. It was portrayed by some of the early managers as an over-zealous effort to be ‘politically correct’, and comments were actually made about the impracticability of people negotiating wheelchairs up mountain-sides. The programme persisted with this requirement, however, setting a target of 2% of wages for workers to be targeted at the

disabled. This target has never been met on a national scale, although individual projects and regions have met or even exceeded this target. It has been clear that individual commitment by Project Managers and by Regional Programme Leaders have been responsible for these successes, and this has pointed to the failure to sufficiently engage with such managers to meet the targets – and a failure to demand adherence to the targets (WfW, 2002b: 2).

The project was conceptualised and initiated as a partnership between the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), The Office of the Disabled in the Presidency (ODP), The South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD) and the Department of Labour (DOL), expanded the disability target from 2% to 5% and formulated plans that would allow the successful ‘mainstreaming’ of disabled participants in the WfW programme.

In order to reach this target, a twin approach will be taken whereby projects will be required to meet the 5% target. WfW will pilot both requiring teams to have a disabled worker, and working through the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCOD) to have disabled people form the core of contract teams. It is envisaged that some 30% of the proposed team size (say, six of twenty in a typical contract team) will be disabled. They will be invited to bring in other team members, and be given closed contract opportunities over the two-year training period stipulated in the Nedlac Agreement and labour law (WfW, 2002b: 3).

Unfortunately, when the research process began, there was almost no awareness about *Working on Capability*. This was because, as Thando (24/04/2008) puts it, the initiative had turned out to be ‘stillborn’. He describes why:

At that time if you look at the history it was really just Guy [Preston] saying but hang on we not really doing anything in a formalised framework to make sure that we are actually addressing the disability issue and that was his attempt at getting at least a high policy level think together and hopefully get it translated through to our interventions. And there wasn't really key personnel to push it through. There is very much personality driven things, again if you look at our history there was a lots of negative noise between Guy and the social development person at that stage he was meant to sort of... so that the other human dynamic that you always have to factor in.

This is a list of the cardinal reasons why mainstreaming policy fails (or ‘evaporates’) – it becomes associated with particular individuals, or a narrow agenda, it faces resistance from staff, and has little institutionalised support (Longwe, 1997).

However, the disability target remains a part of WfW practice and an important aspect of the investigation was how these senior staff conceptualised and operationalised the notion of disability and why concrete policy and systems of practice have not been developed to ensure its mainstreaming. All of the senior staff I interviewed showed genuine interest in questions around disability. When asked to or define disability the majority used relational rather than attributional language; that is, understanding disability as an interaction between a body and a context that renders the less able. Ken (05/05/2008) even challenged me on my use of ‘disabled people’ – suggesting instead that I use ‘people with disabilities’. This passage is typical of the exchanges we had about disability in the practice of WfW:

[what do you think the primary problems would be of having people with disabilities in the programme?]

The obvious thing is the perception around disability, you know the stigma around disability. I think that point number one, the stigma around disability which we need to

deal with. And then secondly would be, secondary to that would be the physical work and the fact that we have to look at specific job categories, which means that we would have to be a little innovative about the way in which we work.

[So it's almost as though the two parts of the problem, both of them are challengers for staff – both thinking about who disabled people, people with disabilities, and then thinking creatively about how we can get them in.]

The getting them in part is easy. Okay. Because I can get you to come and sit in my bakkie the whole day. It's about getting them therefore something meaningful.

[Absolutely. Again this is a bit of a broad question – how would you say WfW has done in terms of its own targets? With regards to disability in particular?]

Look if you talking targets, you're talking numbers. If you talking numbers then targeted employment in general, I think we've done well on women, I think we doing progressively better about targeting youth but that's specifically because you know the way we work is more open to having young people working in the programme because the nature of the work is physical and because secondly we're offering good economic opportunities. I don't think, and I think the numbers will back me up we haven't done as well on our own targets in terms of persons with disabilities. Now if we look at the target WfW's target is 5%, the EPWP target is 2%. I think we are just about hitting the EPWP target but we are far off our own target. Again that's just looking at the numbers. We also need to look at what's the story behind the numbers and whether we are actually providing quality opportunities Sophie (24/05/2008).

There are two primary things worth noting about this exchange: first, the insistence on quality of participation – the provision of quality opportunities – is indeed heartening but, second, none of the staff could speak in or offer specifics about how disabled people could be mainstreamed in WfW to achieve such positive outcomes. As a review of it a specific case study put it – “it would seem that there is very little or no understanding of how people with disabilities could participate or work in the project i.e. the kind of jobs they are able to do” (Sadan, 2005: 13). Indeed, in my survey of the ‘grey literature’ produced by the organisation I could only find one other document that focused on disability within the programme. Entitled *Towards Inclusions of People with Disabilities: An Overview*, it outlines the medical and social models and (the broad) policy context related to disability. However, it stops short of giving any further guidance on the specific types of jobs people with disabilities may do in the programme<sup>45</sup>. As a follow up to the questions presented above, I asked whether the WfW staff knew of any policies or source documents that they could use to guide their thinking about disability, and not one staff member could make a specific suggestion. This is a serious limitation amongst staff tasked with the formulation of the policy and research that informs the social aspects of Working for Water.

For example, none were aware of the notion of reasonable accommodation<sup>46</sup> - a legal right that all disabled WfW participants *should* be able to claim. This is the lifeblood of current disability

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<sup>45</sup> For example, its final paragraph explains a general approach without engaging in specifics: “Employers often feel overwhelmed by this task and have no clue where to begin, yet help is readily available. Disabled people themselves are key resource to inform such initiatives and professionals such as occupational therapist and physiotherapist can provide additional expertise. Occupational therapists in particular, are skilled in addressing barriers which prevent disabled people from engaging in their chosen occupations, work being one of these occupations” (WfW, n.d.: 3).

<sup>46</sup> “The aim of the accommodation is to reduce the impact of the impairment of the person's capacity to fulfil the essential functions of a job... effectively removing the barrier to a person being able to perform the job, and to enjoy equal access to the benefits and opportunities of employment” (DoL, 2002). A fuller discussion of reasonable accommodation can be found in the following chapter.

legislation because it places the financial responsibility on employers (and potential employers) to facilitate the full participation of disabled people by making whatever changes to the working environment or providing access to assistive devices that may be required to compensate for their impairments. This clearly has budgetary implications but, when these were pointed out during the interviews, all suggested making an ad hoc arrangement to accommodate these needs. While this is not an outrageous suggestion, disability mainstreaming involves planning in advance for these kinds of institutional needs (otherwise a vicious cycle is established in which the disabled are not catered for, so they do not participate, so they are not catered for etc.).

Ultimately, when placed side-by-side with a 611 item checklist, the disparity between the conceptualisation and operationalisation of environmental programme and the mainstreaming of people with disabilities is profound. None of the technologies of governmentality, 'what is to be known' and 'what is to be done' (Foucault, 1991b), that make up the building blocks of bureaucratic action are yet in place. This, as I have argued, is the result of a complex set of governing rationalities and institutional dynamics that have marginalised the most challenging, transformative target of the programme.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the ambiguous and articulated discourses contained within the environmental and social aspects of WfW are responsible for its political success. These have most concretely been expressed in the two primary narratives that emerge from the senior staff in the programme around 'innovation' and 'delivery'. It then argued that the technologies and practices that shape the environmental aspects of the programme remains the centre of the organisation, eclipsing its social aspects. The social aspects of the programme have a 'hierarchy of practice' of their own – with training been prioritised over its social and transformational functions – shaped by wider governmental rationalities of rule and discourses. Finally, it is reviewed the state of knowledge about disability mainstreaming amongst the senior staff in WfW and found that while there is certainly a willingness to engage with the issues, little capacity or attention has been devoted to the issue that is far by the programme. This means that individual project leaders are provided with a target, 'people with disabilities', but little other institutional or policy guidelines about how to meet these targets. As WfW staff themselves emphasise, the *quality* of the inclusion of disabled people is a determining factor in achieving developmental or transformative outcomes. The following chapter investigates how project leaders, without specific guidance from WfW Head Office, go about trying to meet their disability targets.



## **6. Finding Disabled People in SANParks Practice: Loosing the Target to the Politics of Policy**

Working for Water (WfW) has managed to carve out an impressive institutional and policy presence on the national stage in South Africa. However, it relies on an intricate network of 'implementing agents' to put policy into practice 'on the ground'. This chapter will empirically explore two types of disconnect created by the translation of WfW policy into the practice of three South African National Parks (SANParks) projects operating in Table Mountain National Park (TMNP).

The first disconnect is created by a combination of political priorities and institutional reporting processes which direct the decision-making of project leaders towards a narrowed set of prioritised outcomes for the programme. This form of disconnect, is the result of the creation of a 'hierarchy of practice' by the particular political and institutional forces indicating what is required to sustain support for the programme. It is about 'fixing' the articulated discourses in WfW into concrete practice in such a way as to favour specific aspects of the discourse coalitions that make it up – specifically the environmentalists (although, as has been shown in the previous chapter, this also constitutes a diverse group) and 'traditional' understandings of Public Works Programmes (with an emphasis on wage labour over training). Neither of these groups prioritises disability mainstreaming: achieving inclusionary practice effectively becomes marginalised as it is positioned at the bottom of the programme's hierarchy of practice.

The second form of disconnect is the friction created as the 'rational', ordered precepts of policy, based on particular 'universals' such as work, training and disability, have to be translated into particular, contextually-relevant practices, instruments and institutions. This friction consists of various 'compromises' (Li, 1999) between policy and practice that primarily involve "social processes of enrolment and the work of 'translation' (of policy goals into practical interests; practical interests back into policy goals)" (Mosse, 2004: 647). Project leaders mobilise and concretise the 'common sense' signifiers that have proved dominant within the shaping discourses, into particular choices about practice. For example, what constitutes a person with a disability? What constitutes full or equal participation for people with disabilities? What kind of training enables the participation of people with disabilities in the formal economy? How much organisational time/resources should be devoted to exiting people with disabilities into new opportunities?

The chapter is made up of four sections. The first section describes Table Mountain National Park and the three WfW/SANParks alien clearing programmes, which are the focus of this chapter. The second traces the impact of the programme's systems of accountability in narrowing and establishing a hierarchy of practice. More specifically, it shows that project leaders are encouraged by senior staff and the structure and processes of budgeting, reporting and performance assessment, to prioritise spending (a key measure of 'effectiveness' in the South African government due to the dominance of the Treasury; van Donk and Pieterse, 2006) and the achievement of easily quantifiable outcomes (with a particular focus on 'hectares cleared' – the key environmental metric). As a result, the social impacts of the programme (outside of narrow, quantifiable outcomes such as 'person days' of employment and training) are de-emphasised and in the case of its most challenging 'target' group of participants, people with disabilities, obscured to the point of functional invisibility. The third and fourth sections are concerned with outlining the complexities of practice as the projects pursue the two layers of social impacts envisaged in the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) and WfW policy. First, the (short term) provision of employment opportunities for impoverished communities (although it is worth remembering that in these projects, wages are intentionally set below minimum wage). Second, as compensation for the low wages, the

programme should have a range of developmental impacts, including training, social development interventions and the formulation of exit strategies to move individuals into new opportunities for training or employment. The former can theoretically be achieved during the pursuit of the other goals of the programme, while the latter requires additional conceptualisation and effort by the project staff to be effectively implemented. WfW has formulated policy to inform the practice of the organisation with regards to achieving each of these levels of impact. Considering each layer in turn, this chapter traces the frictions created as project staff have grappled with shaping the practice and impact of the programme to include disabled people.

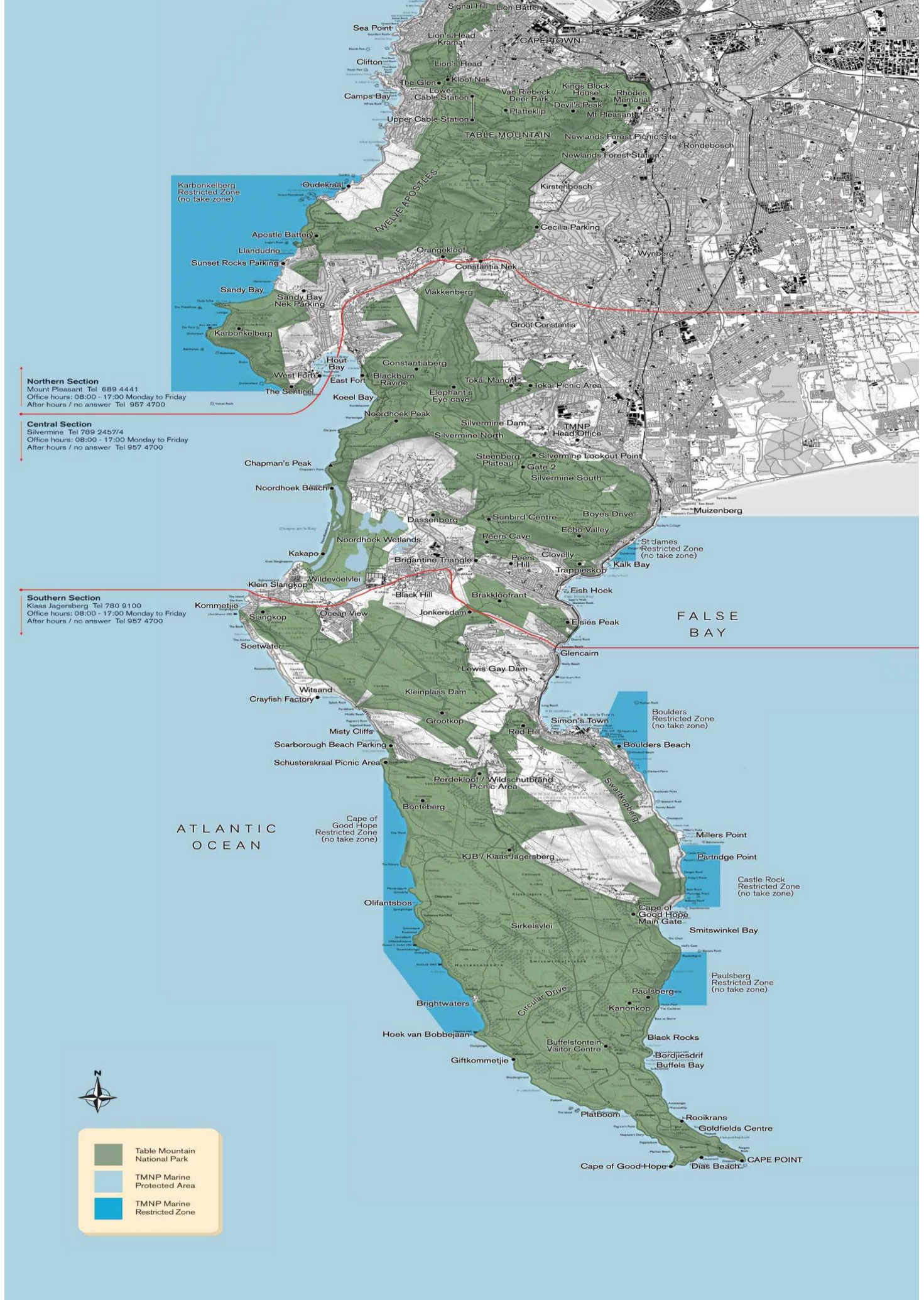
The third section examines the instruments involved in targeting, recruiting and enabling the participation and retention of disabled people in WfW projects. While the successful negotiation of the friction created by all of these processes are required to achieve the first social impact identified above (the employment of disabled people), it shows that the disjuncture between policy and practice is so profound that disabled people are 'lost' to the practice of the projects – the policy has 'evaporated'. In the fourth section, attention is given to the practices concerned with shaping the developmental impact of the programme – training (and social development; grouped because there is little distinction made at a project level) and the exiting of participants. While project leaders were unable to describe specific provisions for disabled participants in these processes, the analysis shows the frictions created by implementing WfW policy serve largely to undermine the (policy indicated) intent of these interventions. Furthermore, it argues that the instability and marginalisation of these processes in the general practice of the programme, and the need for them to be specifically adapted for disabled people, would seem to indicate that there is very little possibility of disabled people being included in them as long as the status quo persists.

## **6.1. Table Mountain National Park and its WfW/SANParks Alien Clearing Projects**

Table Mountain National Park (TMNP), one of the twenty-two parks that make up SANParks, was established in 1998 when its land and personnel were transferred from the City of Cape Town. It is unique amongst South African National Parks as it is surrounded almost entirely by urban and residential areas and is fragmented by privately owned land. Nevertheless, it covers 80% of a 30,000 hectare area that was identified as the Cape Peninsula Protected Natural Environment (CPPNE) and protects the vital heart of the biodiverse Cape Floral Plant Kingdom, a natural World Heritage Site. "Key to its sustainable growth [therefore] is the recognition that the metropolitan area of Cape Town and the Park are intertwined resulting in a Park within a City and a City within a Park" (Stanlish and Boting, 2006a: 1). It is the most visited park in South Africa (4.3 million visits in 2001) and research conducted in 2006 concluded that, after taking into account its multiplier effects, it had cumulatively contributed R552 million to the Gross National Product of South Africa between 1999 and 2006 and sustained 1,113 local and national jobs (Stanlish and Boting, 2006b). Due to the fractured nature of the land controlled, the Park has been divided into three terrestrial managerial areas<sup>47</sup>: 'North' stretches from Signal Hill to Constantia Nek, 'Central' stretches from Constantia Nek to Noordhoek and 'South' extends down from Noordhoek to the Cape of Good Hope (see the red dividing lines in Figure 3). Each of these is managed by an Area Manager, Section Rangers and field staff who are responsible for a range of functions including biodiversity management, clearing of alien plants, fire management, visitor management and law enforcement. Each of the alien clearing projects investigated in this research was located in one of these area structures.

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<sup>47</sup> With a fourth covering the Park's Marine Protected Areas along the coastline.



**Figure 3: Table Mountain National Parks managerial areas**  
 (The red lines indicate the boundaries between managerial areas)

SANParks represents somewhat of an unusual implementing agent for WfW insofar as it has its own national systems and structures<sup>48</sup>. The institutional structure and reporting lines, as was explained to me by the project leaders in 2008, was as follows: Each Alien Clearing project has a project leader, assistant project leader and an administrative assistant. The project leader effectively has two line managers: Senior Rangers from TMNP and an assistant cluster manager (and above them a cluster manager) from WfW. The Senior Rangers are responsible for managing the quality of the clearing work – each clearing site must be inspected by Field Rangers before the contractors are paid. Within the WfW cluster there are two assistant cluster managers and a cluster manager. Together they administer the Cape cluster, “which includes Agulhas, Table Mountain and three different projects, West Coast, Tankwa Karoo, Richtersfeld. So there are various projects going on, not all Working for Water even, some of them are Coast Care, or Working on Wetlands, or public works programmes” (Sam, 12/08/2008). This cluster manager reports to a WfW implementation manager who, along with the Working on Coasts’ implementation manager, report to an overall Invasive Species Control Unit Implementation Manager. She reports to the WfW National Implementation Manager located at WfW Head Office. However, it is worth noting that this particular configuration is also treated by project leaders as being in flux<sup>49</sup>. This split between WfW and SANParks requires project leaders to navigate a complex institutional terrain and ultimately affects their day-to-day decision-making:

[And this is something else am trying to get straight - you're hired by?]

South African National Parks.

[But your budget is paid by...]

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry gives us a certain amount of money for operational costs, so that's our alien clearing and our training, and then a percentage of that gets given from National Parks for management costs, which is our salaries, money for fuel and so on. So I work for National Parks but I manage external funds.

[Does that affect you in any day-to-day way?]

It does, sometimes, because we are seen as, as an appendage of National Parks, just a floating body next to National Parks. So there's no integration, or we are starting to recognise that we need integration, we are part of National Parks, we are speaking to Section Rangers, we should be liaising with everybody. But when I first started we worked independently, I mean I could sign any document I wanted to. But now I need to go through a certain system of people within National Parks.

[Does that make your life easier or harder?]

It does make it a little more difficult. I mean my time management have to be on all the time otherwise there is a delayment of payment

...

<sup>48</sup> This stands in contrast with other implementing agents (such as municipalities) who form relationships with WfW located within the provincial structures of DWAF.

<sup>49</sup> [Why you think it's structured like that?] I have no clue ((she laughs)). You see we used to have a senior project manager for Table Mountain National Park and then a cluster adviser. The senior project manager of Table Mountain basically went from project to project and helped everybody out and that worked. But about a year ago they changed the structure to two assistant cluster advisers to handle the entire Cape cluster. I don't know why they changed the structure; it's not going to get any better. It just goes along trying something new, to see what works, I'm sure it will change soon. We'll have assistant, assistant cluster advisers (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

I mean if I want something to be approved now, we have something called an ad hoc request, if I need to buy something that has not been planned for but I do need it, like a colour printer for instance, I need to send something called an ad hoc request to my assistant cluster adviser. And sometimes in National Parks they won't have e-mail, or cellphone reception or... things slow down. It's irritating for me (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

Project leaders therefore have to negotiate extremely complex, and changing, institutional environments, which are heavily mediated by their reporting systems – in this example, it is about who signs off on their expenditure. The implications of this are examined in the next section.

Each project operates by training and employing contractors who lead teams of workers, usually made up of between nine and twelve people, with the number of teams employed by each project based on the area needed to be cleared, their planning and the size of their operating budget. In 2008 North employed nine teams, Central employed twelve teams and South employed seven teams; in total, therefore, the project employed between 260 and 300 people<sup>50</sup>. The contractors and workers that make up these teams are drawn from a range of communities around Cape Town. The project leader from TMNP North<sup>51</sup> describes drawing teams from “Hout Bay, the fishing village or Imizamo Yethu, I've got one team from Denune, I've got a team from Nyanga, two teams from Khayelitsha, one team from Lotus River”; TMNP Central draws them from “Masiphumelele, next to Fish Hoek, Ocean View, Westlake, and Imizamo Yethu, and Khayelitsha as well” and TMNP South from “Red Hill, Masiphumelele/Site Five and Ocean View.” While project leaders reported no problems meeting their gender and youth targets, at the time of the research, project leaders were only able to identify four participants as people with disabilities (approximately 1.4%)<sup>52</sup>.

While my initial meetings with project leaders were at the professional, almost corporate, office of SANParks in the Westlake shopping and office centre, I subsequently met with them in the buildings from which they worked (with the exception of TMNP South because of accessibility concerns). The buildings themselves echoed the experience of Thandi above – they were physical manifestations of the projects' status as ‘floating body next to National Parks’. TMNP North operates out of a single room in the Ranger Station at the base of Rhodes Memorial and holds its monthly meetings with contractors and worker representatives either in the small meeting room or, more frequently, in a nearby structure that resembles a disused barn. While it represents a central point, the majority of the teams had to travel a long distance from Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay and many described the majority of the work they perform as being closer to home than this office. TMNP Central office is located in a dilapidated building next to an old manor house bordering on the Tokai Plantations. Again, the majority of the teams are drawn from Masiphumelele and Ocean View, which are relatively close to provide stable work but far from the office. A common element, therefore, was the peripheral ‘feel’ of the projects and their physical separation from the sites of practice. This takes on a particular significance when considering the common complaint from project leaders that they were forced to spend the majority of their time in office on reporting rather than supervising work ‘in the field’ (see the quotation from Sam in the following section).

In 2008, the combined budgets (including both managerial and operational costs) of all three projects amounted to R24 million. While this may seem like a large development intervention in absolute terms, the project at Agulhas National Park was able to motivate for and be assigned a R40

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<sup>50</sup> As the section on participation and retention discusses in more detail, this number should always be considered approximate because of the high levels of turnover and instability that pervades the work.

<sup>51</sup> These quotations are not referenced because doing so may endanger the anonymity of interviewees.

<sup>52</sup> It is worth noting that in the lead up to the research the projects were reporting eight disabled participants. It is difficult to say whether this discrepancy has to do with inaccurate reporting, high levels of turnover or the instability in the operational definition of disability.



million budget for the same financial year. This difference can be ascribed to the structure and functioning of the programme's reporting structure – 'delivery' is rewarded – and the high turnover and, as a result, the youth and inexperience of TMNP staff mitigate against delivery. For example, in a discussion comparing TMNP to the well-established project in Agulhas National Park, Sam (12/08/2008) argues

...we also have a problem at Table Mountain because of the high turnover staff. I mean, I myself, I am second longest term project manager and I have been a project manager for a year and a half. You know what I mean?

[Ja, in terms of learning any real lessons about what works and what doesn't and so on.]

Ja and it takes time to learn those lessons, you know, to really build plans and strategies in really getting to the partnerships, which we all want to, but you're just kind of whoosh, you spend like one year or two and it's like woah, and I mean even still I am learning.

Establishing systems of practice and learning, let alone innovation, undoubtedly depends on basic stability in the project. But in the TMNP the project staff, and particularly the project managers, are all young and inexperienced (in terms of managing multi-million Rand budgets and approximately a hundred employees). Thandi (01/10/2008) explains:

Well, at the project level you will find that the project managers are pretty young, mainly because these are managers who have progressed from being assistant project managers and those assistant project managers came from being students. So more often than not you will find that we have pretty young teams. I mean my team at the moment is, I am 22 ((laughs)), my assistant project manager is 24, the project administrator is 28. So technically Working for Water sees us as youth because we are all under 35... I'm not quite sure, it's the first time I'm thinking about it; I think Table Mountain has the youngest managers... It depends on you are a person, if you have the maturity to handle people. Admittedly I had a problem at the beginning because the contractors are by nature twice my age and it was kind of, 'who is this young child to tell me what to do?' But as soon as they realised that you control their livelihoods, they listen. You have to enforce your authority somehow. But I don't intimidate at all. I don't like to manage people like that.

There are potentially two sets of consequences of the complexity, uncertainty and inexperience highlighted here. First, the communication of centrally determined policy, and the fostering of institutional norms and values which support the implementation of this policy, is complicated and often 'patchy'. As neo-institutionalists have argued, institutions function through discursive practices which shape and limit the choices available to actors by supplying them with "regularised behavioural rules, standards of assessment, and emotive commitments" (Fischer, 2003: 28). An inability to establish these regularised standards and emotive commitments endangers the implementation of policy as is envisaged by its formulators<sup>53</sup>. Second, the ability of individual projects and junior project leaders to innovate and contribute these innovations to organisational learning and policy reformulation is limited. Without secure organisational values and clear system of communication, locally-led innovation will go unreported for fear of being reprimanded for breaking with practice. Therefore, instead of policy and organisational norms and values shaping practice, it becomes heavily influenced by systems of accountability which are the most immediate and concrete demands visible to project leaders.

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<sup>53</sup> However, as a number of implementation studies have argued, this is not necessarily problematic as it may result in more contextually relevant practice or solutions.

## 6.2. Tracing the Impact of Systems of Accountability: the Power of Enumeration

A powerful theme emerging from my interactions and interviews with project managers was how (over-)determining systems of accountability<sup>54</sup> were in shaping their priority setting and the nature and content of their practice. The issue of reporting and budgeting was immediately present in the initial interviews I conducted with project leaders as I had approached them towards the end of their financial year and all of them expressed concern about meeting targets and deadlines (and were therefore somewhat more reticent to participate in the research). For example, my first interaction with Thandi (01/10/2008) began:

[And you said in your e-mail that this was a bit of a bad time of year?]

It's a funny time of year. It's getting to the stage where if you're not spending your money, they are going to take it away. So everything is kind of iffy at the moment, if you don't spend your money they will take it away, if you do overspend they kind of discipline you.

Immediately present was the idea of the 'disciplinary' nature of the system of budgeting and reporting – spend it or else! However, it was still plausible that it had emerged as such a strong theme because of the particular preoccupations of that time of year. Based on my interviews with WfW and on the governmentality literature, I was interested to understand how project managers navigated the 'differentiated unity' produced by the various discourses within the programme, particularly between the environmental and social strands. So a number of my questions focused on how they understood the priorities emerging from the WfW policy. What strongly emerged was the importance of the financial system in understanding and prioritising these strands:

[One more general question has to do with the goals of your project and where you set your priorities. What are the primary goals and what are the priorities in terms of those?]

Well in terms of my job, priorities are to stick to my annual plan of operation. So that includes the budget, that includes training, what we call person days, so that includes the number of people working per year, and hectares cleared. So that's my primary objective. Obviously included in that, unsaid, is quality, is quality of work and development of contractors. But definite priorities are progress, you know, spending money, getting contracts out early, finishing them, which in some ways causes problems, definitely. Because you are so concerned about spending that money, because you are going to lose it, that you are often missing out (Sam, 12/08/2008).

The core priority emerging from the interviews was the level of expenditure that project leaders were able to sustain<sup>55</sup>. This is then managed through the Annual Plan of Operation (APO) which establishes targets based on a few core metrics, including the number of person days<sup>56</sup> of work and training provided and the number of hectares cleared. These exist in a hierarchy as well:

[And then in terms of hectares and work hours are those pretty much on a par?]

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<sup>54</sup> Systems of accountability, here, refer to organisational processes such as reporting, planning, budgeting and performance assessment.

<sup>55</sup> Both Candice and Thandi immediately confirmed that the first aspect of their reporting that will be scrutinized is their 'expenditure' or 'financials'.

<sup>56</sup> A metric created to represent the number of eight hour working days created by the programme.

... The first thing is money, the second thing is hectares. Obviously the hectares and the person days are connected to the finances through the budget (Sam, 12/08/2008).

The important thing here is the implicit understanding that the pursuit of the programme's expenditure and environmental targets means that it will meet its social targets. By triangulating the various metrics, senior managers are then able to calculate their manager's efficiency:

[In terms of spending, I know they talk about people, person days, is that the kind of bottom-line when it comes to spending?] Ja. [how much money you transfer?]

Let's say basically if I paid 10 contractors or a team, they (management) check how many person days they have worked and then they will look at if it was really worth it. Because sometimes you might issue a contract for let's say 30 days and the team works 10 days and now you end up spending, you have to give them the full amount. So they look at those things (Candice, 20/10/2008).

As Sam (12/08/2008) points out this is also linked to the quality of the work that is performed and the project's development of the contractors (because each contract must be 'signed off' by a park ranger, based on quality). This, in turn, is a determining factor in their levels of pay<sup>57</sup> and ultimately their career prospects<sup>58</sup>. It is important to note that the structuring role of the budget is not only determined by a de-personalised system of reporting (see below) but reinforced by the active attention of senior members of the institution. This emerged, unprompted, in the interviews:

[In terms of the informal interest that gets shown in terms of how you are doing from your bosses and so on, where do you think they normally lie?]

Progress. Because they are under a lot of pressure, because this funding has anywhere to go. People are always asking about progress. Are you behind? Are you behind? What are you doing to catch up? And so we are asked those questions a lot of the time and we need to have action plans, catch up plans, these sorts of things. So you are always so busy: these kind of budgets and plans that you are missing the plot a lot of the... the project managers should be in field 80% of the time at least, I'm in the field 10% of my time if I'm lucky. I'm hating it, I'm hating that fact. I love being in field, I love it but...

[So that's the key, administratively, you are writing documents and filling out stuff.]

I see the importance of it you know, reliability, that in the future communication is established, documenting things. It makes sense but it just seems way out of proportion to the expectations that are put upon you (Sam, 14/11/2008).

The organisational culture, and the underpinning values communicated, centre on levels of spending and efficiency. The other aspect that emerges here, which was repeated by all project managers, is frustration with the extensive nature of the reporting structure. This reporting structure relies

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<sup>57</sup> "Every year we get an increase and that percentage increase depends on how you have delivered throughout the year. So every quarter, okay each quarter is made up of three months, and each month we have a certain amount of money and a certain amount of person days to meet and hectares to clear and all of that. If you over achieve, that percentage is higher so your increase is higher, whereas if you underachieve that percentage is lower. So we get assessed on a quarterly basis on how we meet our targets" (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

<sup>58</sup> "The other is that you are not spending money on alien clearing. So in the future you will be spending a lot more money on follow up clearing. Because if the quality of work is bad then instead of the cost and the person days decreasing every time you do a follow up session on an area, it's increasing then it just proves that you're a crappy manager. I can't have that put on me now. It's too early in my career" (Thandi, 01/10/2008).



heavily on quantitative targets and, as Sam (12/08/2008) explains, strongly determined by a mixture of the planning tools themselves (set by head office) and the *environmental* context of the project:

[In terms of the planning, do you plan by yourself as a project and then hand it over?]

No, we have a central hub. They prepared the template, the percentages, and you know the cell turned red if you've gone over the limit, which is helpful. Sometimes I feel those limitations aren't really at the right percentages but, I mean, that's my opinion. So I don't agree with them always, but that's life. And then basically we pull out all of our information, what we are looking for, what were we are looking to do, in conjunction with the land managers, the area managers, the Section Rangers. Then make sure they are in full agreement: these areas are priorities, these can be left until next year. Send that through, first draft, second draft. So it's quite a process.

The notable feature is that even where 'narrative' elements exist, they are largely an opportunity to explain deviations from the planning. Communication and learning appear to flow one way and are directed by a distant and disconnected 'Pretoria'. At one point during our interview Thandi (01/10/2008) expressed her frustration:

There's the weekly reports and the monthly reports but there are all of these other things in between that suddenly Pretoria says 'we want this paper written like that'. And they don't know that we don't sit around doing nothing all the time, they don't know that we are actually busy doing things, I think that they think we just sit around and do nothing. I think they think we sit around waiting for them to send us e-mails about these kinds of things.

Considering the geographical proximity of WfW Head Office, this institutional distance seems particularly ironic. However, in spite of the weight of the reporting system, Thandi (01/10/2008) explains that some flexibility exists:

So planning plays a very big a role; Monday morning meetings as the group of the three. Basically we do our weekly plan, and they give me their weekly plans, and by the end of the week we need to have a certain amount of things done. And I have to make sure that those things are done because it all links up to the APO. We've got monthly targets which means that per week we need to be building towards something. So it's varied actually. I can go between mentoring people, getting more involved with communities, or getting involved with the fieldwork, or looking for new work to do, identifying new projects. It's very varied, I guess it depends on the project manager's personality.

[And in terms of that kind of planning structure, is that something that you inherited?]

It's something that I had to learn. I don't think the other projects work the same way. I think each one is - I think we have unique circumstances. *It depends on how much time you have got free to actually ...be creative.* It depends on, actually, whether you've got the basics right. If you've got your contractors in line, everybody knows what they should be doing and *then you have free time to do whatever else you want to do.* Whereas if you are still trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together, then that's what you will be doing most of the time. That's what I'm stuck in at the moment. Trying to get these guys to build towards the end of the financial year, we've got five months left to the end of the financial year. So I've got to get them in order so I can breathe easy when I exit them. So they don't just crash and burn when they leave (added emphases).

Thus it appears that the quality of the impact, particularly its social impact, is largely a function of the 'project manager's personality' and level of 'free time'. For example, discussing the impact,

Thandi (01/10/2008) begins to point to the potential disconnect between chasing targets (i.e. outcomes) and achieving successful positive changes in ecosystems and communities (i.e. impact):

[In terms of measuring impact, you obviously keep track of hectares cleared?]

We do, but more in terms of the actual hectares cleared compared to what we had planned. But in terms of quality control, in terms of the hectares cleared there is nothing in place. There is this form that you can use but it's all impractical and not really user-friendly.

[And in terms of the social side of things, working hours is the one thing you said, how else do you gauge impact on people and communities? Do you need to?]

Gosh, aside from the project being for alien clearing and conservation purposes and poverty relief, it's the social development side of it that we have to get involved in as well. According to our training planners we need to have social intervention now and again. It's things like we have woman's day, weed buster week, arbour day and then we have to have, it's required by the funder, have we have to have two HIV/AIDS interventions per year.

This interviewee's understanding of the programme as operating within established community dynamics, then, appears to have been reduced to interventions mandated by their training planner and funder's requirements.

Visible throughout this discussion is the overdetermining role of systems of accountability in shaping the practice in TMNP by establishing an implicit hierarchy of the metrics – expenditure<sup>59</sup>, hectares cleared and then person days of work provided. I am aware of the weight of using a theoretically loaded term like overdetermination<sup>60</sup> and yet it seems appropriate to describe the shaping power and heterogeneous contradictions contained in the systems of accountability outlined here. I offer the following from Althusser (2005: 100-101):

If, as in this situation, a vast accumulation of 'contradictions' comes into play *in the same court*, some of which are radically heterogeneous – of different origins, different sense, different *levels* and *points* of application – but which nevertheless 'merge' into a ruptural unity, we can no longer talk of the sole, unique power of the general 'contradiction'... They derive from the relations of production, which are, of course, one of the *terms* of the contradiction, but at the same time its *conditions of existence*; from the superstructures, instances which derive from it, but have their own consistency and effectivity from the international conjunctivity itself, which intervenes as a determination with a specific role to play... In constituting this unity, they reconstitute and complete their basic animating unity, but at the same time they also bring out its nature: the 'contradiction' is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, and even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined

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<sup>59</sup> "A key feature of the implementation of the programme since its inception has been the urgency to spend allocated funding within a financial year. The WfW programme has been one of a few poverty alleviation programmes which has been able to spend a significant percentage of its allocated funds within required timeframes (Parenzee 2003). This success has resulted in large increases in its allocations, and the programme reflects considerable growth over a short period of time" (Sadan, 2005: 3-4).

<sup>60</sup> Indeed, Althusser concludes the passage quoted below with the note: "I am not particularly taken by this term *overdetermination* (borrowed from other disciplines), but I shall use it in the absence of anything better, both as an *index* and as a *problem*, and also because it enables us to see clearly why we are dealing with something quite different from the Hegelian contradiction" (p. 101).

by the various levels and instances of the social formation it animates; it might be called over-determined in its principle (original emphasis).

The accountability system represents a 'ruptual unity' (or 'differentiated unity' in Hall's vocabulary) in which the contradictory discourses outlined in the previous chapter about the EPWP and WfW become fixed into a single structure, which nonetheless is then reinterpreted within a specific historical moment and social context as the decision-makers interpret them. That is, the particular signals they will receive from senior managers, and their own understandings of the purpose of the programme and the social problems it seeks to address, are important in their interpretation of the 'technical' and 'rational' systems of accountability operating in the organisation.

To begin to tease out the role of the accountability system in expressing a particular interaction between the 'relations of production' and 'conditions of existence', it is worth noting the particular features of it and how they intersect with wider trends in the systems of governance in South Africa. Foucault (1991) and Hacking (1982), amongst others, have pointed to the 'avalanche of numbers' that have characterised the emergence of the modern state. However, it is worth remembering that governmentality refers both to the government of conduct and the conduct of government – it refers also to the way in which government goes about achieving its aims (Dean and Hindess, 1998). In the post-apartheid South African state, numbers took on a special significance in a public sector reform strategy<sup>61</sup> that would enable the simultaneous process of decentralisation and, especially as delivery proved elusive in various sectors, the centralisation of systems of control and guidance – a process that has been called 'top-down direction for bottom-up implementation' (Long and Franklin 2004: 309).

For the purposes of this discussion, the most notable aspect of this reform strategy is the influence of new public management (NPM) principles in this process (Schmidt, 2008; Harrison, Todes and Watson, 2008). NPM is a conceptual label given to a range of approaches to public management (emerging from the UK and New Zealand) that sought to apply market principles to government administration – placing an emphasis on competition, contracting and 'customer satisfaction' as well as increased autonomy for managers (although linking this to processes of performance measurement and performance-related pay; Adamolekun, 2005). Considered as a whole, therefore, Pollitt (1995) suggests that NPM has eight characteristic 'trends': (1) strengthening steering functions at the centre; (2) devolving authority, providing flexibility; (3) ensuring performance, control, accountability; (4) improving the management of human resources; (5) optimizing information technology; (6) developing competition and choice; (7) improving the quality of regulation; and (8) providing responsive service. NPM has therefore been considered a specific *expression* of the various forms of neoliberal governmentality that have shaped global capital and the nation state over the past thirty years - "Rather than *less* government, neoliberalism in this view represents a *new modality* of government predicated on interventions to create the organizational and subjective conditions for entrepreneurship" (Hart, 2004: 92, original emphasis). There are, however, also a number of reasons NPM has proved politically attractive as a management strategy. Pieterse (2007:28) explains:

The persuasive power of this approach is that it promises financial savings through greater efficiency and less political risk because many state responsibilities are shifted to other actors that can potentially be blamed for the lack of delivery. NPM interpretative frameworks also provide simple answers for complex issues and clear procedural steps to solve specific problems and so create a false sense of achievement. Often, in terms of

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<sup>61</sup> Outlined in the White Paper on Public Sector Transformation of 1995, White Paper on Local Government of 1998 and consolidated in legislation such as the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 and the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003.

narrow financial performance targets, certain successes are achieved but this is typically divorced from indicators that deal with outputs and outcomes.

Compared to other public management theories, NPM places a greater emphasis on outcomes and efficiency through the better management of the public budget (Hood, 1991) in order to achieve the 'three E's': economy, efficiency and effectiveness (prioritised in that order by Maesschalck, 2004: 482). Indeed, by 2008, the Public Services Commission (2008:25) sounded the alarm:

Amidst the rising influence of ideas advanced by the New Public Management (NPM) since the 1980s, public managers need to be even more vigilant to avoid an uncritical focus on efficiency and economy without any regard for effectiveness. The NPM generally promotes the adoption of private sector practices such as the introduction of competition among service providers through term contracts, and a focus on outputs and results rather than processes. However, if Public Service managers uncritically adopt NPM principles, they may end up pursuing narrow efficiency gains which do not address other important performance dimensions that are relevant to their respective contexts.

These elements pepper the approach of WfW and SANParks; some of which are the result of it being a government programme, while others are self-imposed: the heavy influence of 'templated' planning and budgeting; the use of ratios between narrow metrics and levels of expenditure to assess the *efficiency* of performance; paradoxically relatively high levels of managerial autonomy and a firm system of performance assessment; and relatively low levels of attention to tracking or accounting for the effectiveness of the programme or 'other important performance dimensions that are relevant to their respective contexts'. This, however, should not be seen as a suggestion that the programme is a *pure* neoliberal intervention or completely determined by NPM principles.

Following the notion of the overdetermination outlined above, the programme remains a complex combination of the various articulated discourses that have proved to be effective in enrolling various interests into supporting the programme and the specific priorities and social forces present in the specific context of the programme. As Mosse (2004:664) has argued, the role of systems of reporting is to obscure the gap between policy and practice by 'translating' various outcomes back into the model promoted by WfW:

Practices and events are too obviously shaped by the logic and demands of institutional relations (and incentives). Indeed, during the 'implementation phase' all the diverse and contradictory interests that were enrolled in the framing of an ambiguous policy model and project design, all the contests and contradictions that are embedded in policy texts, are brought to life and replayed. At the same time, development workers and managers are unable (or unwilling) on the basis of this experience to contradict the models in terms of which they are busy framing and validating their enterprises and identities; the models that make them successful, ensure coalitions of support and justify the flow of resources. So, while the coherence of design unravels in the practical unfolding of a project, everybody is particularly concerned with making, protecting, elaborating and promoting models with the power to organize authoritative interpretations, concealing operational realities, re-enforcing given models and limiting institutional learning.

It is important to emphasise, however, that this is not to say that policy has no effect or is unimportant: it forms the bedrock (or presents decision-makers with the core contradictions) that makes up the contradictions, compromises and frictions that make up 'practice'. Therefore, while the current institutional processes and political currents created the hierarchy presented above, effectively obscuring policy goals such as targeting marginalised groups providing appropriate training for future employment, or other forms of 'social development' interventions and the systematic planning for the 'exiting' of participants, these all remain part of the organisational

lexicon. As has been the case elsewhere in WfW, project leaders with specific interest or experience (or 'personality') may innovate ways to achieve these targets. However, for the moment, the peripheral nature of these social goals serves to doubly marginalise the need to include disabled people. That is, in addition to the de-prioritisation of these processes *in general*, the mainstreaming of disability requires an additional set of specific processes that cannot claim attention or resources until the basic systems are in place. It is to the specific experiences of trying to operationalise and mainstream disability in all the different programme processes that we now turn.

### **6.3. Losing the target: Institutionalising the mainstreaming of disability in TMNP projects**

The most basic social outcome of the EPWP and WfW projects is the provision of employment opportunities for impoverished communities, particularly groups that are underrepresented in the formal economy (woman, youth and the disabled). Achieving this policy goal involves the formulation of strategies, modes of practice and instruments to enable the targeting of the intended beneficiary groups (the unemployed and the specific demographics outlined above); the successful recruitment of these individuals; their 'full'<sup>62</sup> participation in the programme<sup>63</sup> and their retention in order to benefit meaning from the programme<sup>64</sup>. This section reviews the experience of the programme in explicitly including disabled people in each of these stages of the programme. It argues that a poor conceptualisation of 'disability' and deep disconnects between policy and practice (in general and relating to disability) have combined to undermine the systematic inclusion of disabled people in these projects.

#### **6.3.1. Recruiting Disabled People**

Three aspects of the recruitment of disabled people will be considered in this section. First considered is the disconnect between the project leaders' formal and 'working' definitions of disability, necessary for the successful targeting of 'people with disabilities'. Second, the structure of the system of incentives in the recruitment process is reviewed, noting the marginal position of the disability target. Third, this section outlines the almost complete disconnect between the recruitment structure recommended by WfW and SANParks policy, advisory committees, and the needs and opportunities available in practice.

#### ***Defining Disability: the Targeting of 'People with Disabilities'***

When I asked project leaders about the inclusion of disabled people in the project, much of the conversation revolved around the definition of a 'person with disabilities'. Identifying the 'working categories'<sup>65</sup> the project leaders use to go about meeting their disability target is important for two

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<sup>62</sup> I use full participation here to indicate the type of participation that is considered to be contributing 'meaningfully' to the operation of the project; in contrast with token inclusion.

<sup>63</sup> There is perhaps a relatively cynical argument to be made here that this is not necessary as a criterion to achieve a wage transfer. While technically correct, this would seem to undercut the spirit and intent of these public works programmes.

<sup>64</sup> In contrast to high rates of drop out or turnover that introduce instability into the programme and limit its effects on individuals.

<sup>65</sup> I employ the analytical idea of 'working categories' to identify the 'practical reasoning' or 'reasoning-in-context' that Fischer (2003) argues is at the heart of the implementation of policy. In this case, then, it is the

reasons: it provides insight into their population of the content of the categories (i.e. a taxonomy of disability) *and*, as Cocks and Stehlik (1996) argue, particular constructions of disability imply the appropriate social response (i.e. disability as the abnormality of the individual body focuses the curative or ameliorative response on that individual). The two more experienced project leaders who were interviewed as part of this study immediately pointed me to a document they had received (although neither could say how long it had been used in practice) (see Figure 3). While both credited WfW for the document, it was never mentioned in my interviews with head office staff. Given the nature of these interviews it seems likely that they would have mentioned it if they were aware of it. It is therefore likely that it was either devised by the Western Cape WfW management structure (indeed my interview with the provincial manager hinted that such an initiative was brought about by requests by local project leaders for clarity about the disability target) or from within the National SANParks institutions (the document does not contain either WfW or SANPark logos).

This serves as an illustration of policy constantly being remade within the institution (in this case in the form of a concrete tool) in response to the demands of practice. However, it takes on further significance when the content of the document is considered, particularly in contrast to the wider discourses that have informed the inclusion of disabled people thus far. The document seems to be prepared as a 'practical' guide to inform the most basic level of decision-making by project leaders – interviews with WfW staff often emphasised the frustration expressed by WfW staff by policy which was considered to be formulated in terms too broad to instruct specific decision-making. The primary purpose of the document, however, seems to be the direction of project staff as to which 'types' of people with disabilities are able to be *excluded* from particular roles and positions in the programme. The document is a single A4 page, carried on the clipboards of some of the project managers, dominated by a table with different classifications.

## Accommodation of the Disabled in WfW

Certain disabilities have been acknowledged to present an impediment that disfavors certain individuals from being appointed for engagement in the program.

The table below gives a summary of disabilities that can and cannot be accommodated within WfW

<b>1. Project Management In Field + Contractor</b>	
<b>Disability Accommodated</b>	<b>Disability Not Accommodated</b>
Blindness in one eye	Blindness in two eyes
One arm	Epilepsy
One leg	Totally deaf
Any amount of one leg, one arm, finger, etc. missing	Schizophrenia
Excessive weight due to hormonal dis-functioning	Retarded
Partial blindness	
Fused spinal disk	
Hip replacement	
Dyslexia	
<b>2. Project Management In Office</b>	
All of the above disabilities allowed	Schizophrenia
Wheel chair bound	Retarded
Totally deaf	
Epilepsy	
Blindness in two eyes	
<b>3. Machine Operators</b>	
No disabilities allowed at all	
<b>4. General Workers All Of The Above Disabilities Accommodated</b>	
Inclusive of illiterate	
Retarded / down syndrome	
Schizophrenia	

**Note:** it's straightforward to assess a physical disability but to assess mental disability is a more complex issue and would require assessment by a psychologist. All disabilities that are not glaringly obvious would need to be confirmed by a medical practitioner. Also note that a finger cut off at the last joint for traditional purposes is not considered a disabling affliction.

**Figure 4: 'Accommodation of the Disabled in WfW'**

This is a defining document. It limits the types of participation of disabled people in the programme and, by exclusion, suggests different kinds of roles that disabled people will be allowed to play in the programme. No definition of people with disabilities is offered. Based on the labels used, it follows a distinctly biomedical model to conceptualise disability. Disability is generally seen as an attribute of the body (in only some cases to be confirmed by medical practitioners – “its straightforward to assess a physical disability”) rather than the result of an impaired body within a hostile environment. In moving from the general (policy) to the concrete (an instrument), the diversity of disabled people (so consciously expanded by the social model discourse) is limited to a series of labels in this document. The regressive understanding of disability employed in the document is reinforced by its use of labels that are generally considered offensive to the disabled community – ‘wheelchair bound’<sup>66</sup> and ‘retarded’<sup>67</sup>. However, the document’s rather confused reference to missing limbs

<sup>66</sup> Wheelchair users object to this label because it is considered to have an unnecessary value judgement attached. That is, instead of being ‘bound’ to their chair, it is instead considered a useful and enabling device (Harris and Enfield, 2003: 262).

(missing part of a finger is included amongst the 'accommodated' disabilities but excluded in the concluding note when it is associated with a cultural practice) and illiteracy points to an expanded definition of disability. That is to say, these are relational definitions that begin to recognise a relationship between the impairment with the environment (including the cultural environment).

It is worth emphasising that the neutral descriptor 'not accommodated', especially when combined with biomedical designations, masks or minimises the significant implication of the document – certain groups of 'people with disabilities' are not welcome and that a particular label, rather than the disabled person's functional capabilities, is sufficient to designate this lack of accommodation. The designations of 'accommodated' and 'not accommodated' also seem somewhat random. No rationale, description or sources are cited to indicate how the distinctions have been made: why being 'totally deaf' eliminates individuals from holding particular (senior) positions, without reference to the possibility of reasonable accommodation, is unclear. Based on the lack of awareness about reasonable accommodation, the use of offensive terminology and the arbitrary nature of the list, it would seem that it was generated by specific experience in one or multiple projects and was compiled by individual(s) with little general awareness about disability issues. The designation of accommodated disabled people in different roles has concrete effects – WfW/SANParks offers graded pay to individuals playing different roles in the teams. Being unable to become a machine operator or contractor has very real implications for people with disabilities becoming 'full' participants and beneficiaries from the programme.

However, as has been argued throughout this thesis, project leaders quickly described a gap between policy and practice. During our discussions about defining disability, the two project leaders, aware of this document, focused on the example of the cultural practice presented in the concluding note as an example of the complexity of understanding and working with disability. In fact, both agreed that the self evidence of disability ('it's straightforward to assess') presumed by the document masked the conceptual and practical difficulties of understanding and working with these categories:

[Besides the memo, or the sheet of paper which tells you what kinds of disabled people are in and out, what kind of disabled people could you imagine getting involved in a programme like this? What do they have in common, if that makes sense?] ((silence))  
[Well maybe it's easier to do it the other way around, what kinds of disabled people can't get involved in a project like this?]

Considering the nature of a project like this, any kind of lower limb disability, whether it be an amputation or a wheelchair bound. It's incredibly challenging, particularly in Table Mountain... we are mountainous. Also, funnily enough schizophrenia is recognized as a disability, I think it's one that's accepted. I'm not entirely sure if that will fit into a project like this. You see, the list of disabilities, the way they set it up is that they assume all project managers understand what each disability entails and what each person is limited to but I don't think that that kind of thing has been explored much. I mean no one has come to me and said, 'listen [Thandi], these are the kind of disabilities that you should be looking out for or these are the things that certain people can do' or whatever the case may be. It's not something that has been focused on. It's definitely a neglected part. The focus is more on HIV/AIDS and alcohol abuse, particularly in our park (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

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<sup>67</sup> This term is now considered generally objectionable in society (Harris and Enfield, 2003: 262). Its lack of reference to other non-physical disabilities (aside from schizophrenia and dyslexia) seems to imply that 'retarded' is a catchall phrase describing *all* mental, developmental or psychological limitations. This shows a shocking lack of understanding about the diversity of needs and potentials that describe people that experience these limitations – effectively declaring them all unemployable out of hand.



Indeed, as Sam (12/08/2008) suggests, the lack of clear policy informing the pursuit of the targets has resulted in the 'hollow' reporting of disability statistics:

So I was saying in terms of our project, my project... we are employing at the moment nine teams. So a contractor with generally, it ranges, but generally 10 people per team, 11 people in total. So about a hundred in total, so it's a fair number. But we've only got two people registered, recognised as disabled, and those disabilities aren't particularly severe. They work as normal people because both of them have one eye that is, that is not functioning as such. Blind in one eye. So in the sense of disability, I don't know how that falls into the scope and I think in a lot of the projects that would be the case. We had an interview, were interviewing for contractors a while ago and one of the guys we were interviewing was a disabled guy on crutches and, it was definitely a concern for us about whether he could get to the site. It would take him so long, not to mention the actual hazard involved. So that was definitely a big factor in his, the fact that we did not bring him on. So in my exposure, the disability thing definitely gets labelled... We've got 2% disabled and it will look maybe good on books...[but it doesn't come to...] on the ground... the actual development, I don't know how much that is fulfilled. And I think project managers are responsible for a lot of things. And in some ways I think they are given these additional types of things which they are supposed to know everything about but they don't (Sam, 12/08/2008).

Sam (12/08/2008) is intuitively pointing to a 'functional capabilities' conception of disability<sup>68</sup> – if people with disabilities are able to 'work as normal people' are they truly, or sufficiently, disabled to satisfy the 'intention' of including disabled people in these programmes? Both Thandi and Sam point to the combination of the number demands placed on project leaders and the lack of clarity about these important conceptual and practical questions as the reason why 'it's not something that's been focused on'.

I would like to propose an additional factor – none of the projects have to make any additional effort to meet the other two demographic targets, women and youth. Candice (20/10/2008) explained how she did not struggle to get women in her project team:

it's just that the teams that, now I have to refer to other projects, but in my project we don't really struggle getting females, but in other projects most females don't really like working in the mountains. So when the manager tells them they will be working in the mountains they say, 'Oh, sorry I will just pass on that job. I'll rather go work as a nanny than working in the field.' So I think that it is a challenge that most females don't want to be working in field.

Candice (20/10/2008) then provided reasons for the ease of recruiting female workers:

I think it's because they stay in one community. We employ the contractor, the contractor employs his or her own people. So I think it's because they all stay in one community and they know each other. I think that is how they do the selection. And obviously if you are a female you know more females than males. [That makes sense. That's an interesting dynamic that.] I know, it's mostly all females and mostly a female team people. Most teams are females.

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<sup>68</sup> For example, "to understand the reasons why a person has a work-related disability, one has to consider not only the person's own functional capabilities, but also the person's capacities in relation to relevant physical and social environmental expectations and the individual's response to his or her limitations in capacity" (Jette, 1999: 3).

However, the result of this happy coincidence is a lack of clarity about how such a system, for targeting the recruitment of specific demographics, would be set up within the project. Thandi (01/10/2008) outlines this lack of guidance and its effects:

We are meant to have 5% disabled in our teams, they've mention that we as project managers should be looking for people to possible that kind of deliverable. It is actually just impossible to fill a team let alone a specific... but it is project specific. There are projects that are delivering. I'm not saying it's difficult, just for Table Mountain particularly it's an issue. I wouldn't actually know where to start. I suppose when you advertise for posts for contractors, if I were looking for new contractors I can say the following item is an advantage and they would be preferred as a candidates. But more often then not you are actually settling.

[Considering how much, you say you struggled to find contractors who actually work properly.]

And I don't think that's something our head office realises. I think they send out a generic form and everybody gets whatever's on that form. And that's nonsense, that's absolute nonsense (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

The difficult process of targeting of disabled people, therefore, illustrates the interaction between two points that are consistently made in the literature. First, perhaps the first step in policy and governmentality is the designation of a target group (which immediately begins to narrow and designate the proposed 'solution') – it is about *labelling* and *enumerating*<sup>69</sup>. As Hacking (1982:280) famously puts it – “Enumeration demands kinds of things or people to count. Counting is hungry for categories”. Butler's (1990:33) suggests that gender is the “repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being”. If this is so then the diversity of bodies that potentially constitute 'disability' requires a particularly rigid 'regulatory frame' in order to 'congeal' identifiable bodies to be acted upon. This is about moving beyond the binaries that mobilise much of modernist thought (e.g. able and disabled), which prove to be too imprecise to inform the micro-politics of power, to a taxonomy of recognisable (and, in a policy sense, 'legitimate') abnormalities and deficits. However, as Gupta (2001) argues, this should not be seen as a purely negative phenomenon, it is also vital for the productive potential of systems of governmentality. By beginning to delineate people with disabilities, it enables power to be exercised on them, and simultaneously provides them with a more concrete claim to participation in the programme. As Tsing (2004:14) evocatively puts it:

This brings to light a deep irony: Universalism is implicated in *both* imperial schemes to control the world and liberatory mobilizations for justice and empowerment. Universalism inspires expansion—for both the powerful and the powerless. Indeed, when those excluded from universal rights protest their exclusion, this protest itself has a twofold effect: it extends the reach of the forms of power they protest, even as it gives voice to their anger and hope. Political theorist Etienne Balibar refers to “normalization” and “insurrection” as equally inspired by universals (2002). This duality brings us back to the facility of universals for travel. Universals beckon to elite and excluded alike.

The notion of 'disability', therefore, creates the potential for 'impaired' individuals to claim rights (and an identity) that would not ordinarily be available to them. However, while it is not directly addressed in this research, it is also worth remembering that these 'regulatory frames' may well offer ways of being (i.e. performances of identity) in which 'the disabled' do not recognise

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<sup>69</sup> In the case of disability, the enumeration is often both in terms of the absolute number and degree of deficit/level of functionality (i.e. how disabled is the person?).

themselves (Butler, 2004). That is, in order to be recognised as disabled by the programme and more specifically the project staff, individuals must be(have) in ways that conform to working categories being employed by the staff. The law sets the bar even higher – disabled people are only eligible for additional support if they explicitly self-identify as disabled to an employer or the state. This is seen as a ‘loaded’ issue for some individuals who may be impaired or acquire additional support but, for a variety of reasons, do not want to self identify or conform to a disability label. This significant because it raises the stakes for the working categories being employed by the project staff: the more rigidly defined and labelled disability is within the programme, the higher the identity cost for adopting the label. It is because of this level of complexity that disability mainstreaming must be informed by trained and well-informed individuals, ideally in partnership with members organisations in the disabled community.

### ***Incentivising the recruitment of disabled people***

Due to the structure of the WfW programme, incentivising has two parts: the relative priority of the inclusion of disabled people for *project leaders* and the availability of mechanisms to encourage the recruitment of disabled people by *contractors*. Two different groups therefore need to be incentivised to increase the recruitment and participation of disabled people. As Thandi illustrates above, project leaders are willing to make a pragmatic trade off between priorities, in the same way as discussed in the previous section on community relations. They recognise, given the time pressures and the priorities of the programme (expenditure, hectares cleared, person days), that the additional time and effort spent setting up novel systems, and potentially compromising the efficiency of the teams, will not be (sufficiently) rewarded. The message they receive from the organisation is that effort and innovation should therefore be focused on its core priorities.

This calculation, however, is complicated by the contractor system employed by WfW. While the project leader might ultimately be responsible for meeting project targets, processes of recruitment and employment are actually performed by contractors. Therefore, in addition to shifting the incentives for project leaders to prioritise the inclusion of disabled people, a set of systems needs to be put in place to translate this into an incentive for the contractors. One such idea being pursued in these projects is the creation of a ‘pool of contractors’ who then compete with one another for contracts through tenders. This would enable the project leader to declare certain preferred characteristics such as the employment of target groups. However, as Thandi indicates above, all three project leaders struggle to maintain a minimum number of competent contractors. As my field visits confirmed, the quality of the clearing work is an overriding preoccupation of project leaders, and therefore of contractors:

[In terms of the notion of tendering, it would be more a notion of effectiveness? That you know which guys do what they do, in terms of who gets tenders?]

Well there is that but there is a whole sort of criteria. It includes previous work, it includes... but it also definitely includes employing disabled people, employing women. If they are not meeting those percentages then it counts against them. But from a project level we would definitely put the weight on the quality of work (Sam, 14/11/2008).

This is because the ability of the programme spend and clear (and the contractor’s prospects for payment for work) are all tied up in the approval of the Park Rangers of the quality of the work. In addition, efficiency is a core concern for both project leaders and contractors:

[And you pay them for time or how much they clear?]

We pay them for the contract, the amount they quoted for. [Okay, however long that takes them.] Even if I issue let's say 16 days to a site, well they quote for 16 days and they do it in 10, then they still get the 16 days. So it's good when they make a profit, some of them get very innovative way they will increase the size of their teams, where they increase the size of the teams and they finish the site faster (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

The pursuit of inclusionary practice, therefore, has to contend with this bottom line – the programme is designed to maximise the efficiency with which it can meet its environmental targets. This is a fundamental disconnect: efficiency evokes 'the survival of the fittest' and drawing hard bottom lines, while inclusionary practice evokes patience and careful, iterative experimentation. Indeed, the pursuit of an internal system of competition (especially with the continued dominance of quality and effectiveness as the central underlying criteria) would seem to undercut the transformational intent. Ultimately, it seems likely that inclusionary practice will begin with the 'right' incentive structure and an effort to directly address the perceptions of contractors about the inclusion of disabled participants. Candice (20/10/2008) explains the contractor's attitude to employing disabled people:

Hayi, they can't walk, they can't walk. I can see in the one lady going. Hayi, hayi [Candice] you are bringing trouble to us. I think generally that would be the first expression I would get from them. Then again they would look at what kind the disability is. But I know at first they will just be like, 'hayi, hayi they won't walk fast up the mountain, hayi, hayi.'

She goes on to explain that it is a challenge for the project managers to adhere to WfW standards:

Well we always try to make it happen but it's just... we asked them to make it happen but... Mmm, getting the contractors, remember the contractors are more like another company working for us. So as much as we say, 'listen these are our standards,' at the end of the day it's their company. They need to make money, so it's more or less their decision to make, at the end of the day. Even though we say, 'in order to be within Working for Water standards you need to do 1234.'

Expanding the programme to be able to account for these wider developmental goals, such as the inclusion of marginalised groups, begins at this 'coalface'. Contractors need to be given an opportunity and a reason to find roles for disabled participants as full and equal members of their teams. Finally, Candice (20/10/2008) indicates an additional, important obstacle, that of contractors having difficulty in recruiting disabled people:

But I always promote people, encourage people, try to get, if you do know someone, because with us they were asking the people to work in the field so at least they must be able to walk up the mountain and so on but they could be more on the operational side. So I always encourage them *but they say there is nothing much in the communities that they are employing from* (Candice, 20/10/2008).

The recruitment of disabled people occurs within a wider social context and greater awareness within communities about the project, and its interest in recruiting disabled participants, is vital for its ultimate success.

### ***Recruiting from Communities***

As has been outlined in the conceptual chapters, disability is an extremely complex phenomenon that needs to be understood *in relation to* the environmental and social context of impaired individuals (Yeo and Moore, 2003). Their identification, inclusion and participation in development projects, therefore, needs to be done in close partnership both with disabled people and members

of their communities. The central piece of policy guidance regarding community relations within WfW projects is the formation of 'advisory committees'. These are intended to be committees that meet regularly, made up of representatives from the surrounding communities, to assist in the recruitment of participants (contractors and workers), give input into the design and functioning of the project and help to resolve disputes. They therefore represent an important institutional opportunity to create greater awareness about disability in the projects *and* communities. However, while all three project leaders were aware of the concept, they all expressed scepticism about whether it could be translated into practice. For example, Sam (12/08/2008) responded to my question about whether they had been established:

((Sam laughs))<sup>70</sup> ... I don't really have that. I'm supposed to have one, and I'm continually pressurised to get it going but the problem is, I never actually spend too much time trying to get one going. I've tried but it's generally been very last moment, they haven't been much planning involved or the right people. And I've often been very sceptical of the approach. Not for the necessity of it, I agree with the necessity for it, but sceptical of it actually working in the sense that every Advisory Committee I have heard of or have been involved in has not worked. It has either been a political agenda, it been each one with their own agenda, and not actually responding to the needs of the workers, which is the core, which is the idea. And so the project manager spends half his time answering to the Advisory Committee about their agendas but not actually dealing with the issues. So it's definitely something I have kept peripheral, I have tried to avoid, not scoring very well on my deliverables but... I get scored ((inaudible)) on my adherence to those kind of targets. Ja, and typically I fall face flat on those deliverables.

[I mean besides that kind of rating, how much real pressure? You know, people coming and saying listen...]

My direct boss because I think he's also experienced the kind of, you know, and in some ways also feels that people have identified it as a successful thing in certain areas, it has been very successful and I can understand why, and they think ahh formula, bingo, apply to all project. In a way, right. But there needs to be a lot more direction which says, okay, this is what an Advisory Committee is. This is the function, this is how you go about it, how can we help you? Even that kind of thing.

[Have you received... so did somebody basically say to you that you need one?]

Ja, they say roughly what it is but...

[I am just struck by the number of communities you draw people from.]

Well and then you see that yourself. And each one has a *unique* kind of situation. I mean Masiphumelele is complex enough.

A range of issues are visible here: first, project leaders stressed the amount of time it would take to get such an Advisory Committee up and running – to the point that the responsibility has now been transferred to a different resource person<sup>71</sup>. Second, the *general* usefulness of such a committee is questioned, particularly with regard to the politicisation of such bodies and inherent complexity of

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<sup>70</sup> Interestingly all three laughed at the beginning of their response to my questions about advisory committees.

<sup>71</sup> "They've taken [the Advisory Committee] off the project managers heads because they've realised that we've got so much to do. So it's now been given over to our schools development facilitator. It's basically our community liaison. She will basically go to communities, speak to people, possibly get involved in in-house training, induction of new people, that kind of thing" (Candice, 20/10/2008). However, she goes on to explain that this person is being asked to perform this function for all seven parks in the 'Cape Cluster'.

working with poor communities. It is perceived as a formulaic response to a difficult question that, for these project leaders, has little substance. This is an essential problem facing such a decentralised programme, especially one with a relatively poor system of organisational learning (Matland, 1995). A balance has to be struck between providing sufficient guidance on structure and content to render the concept useful, and yet sufficient flexibility must be maintained in order to enable project leaders to tailor it to local conditions. The WfW strategy of creating a target in the reporting system, linked to performance appraisal, may be a successful strategy to try and achieve this balance in the case of experienced project leaders, but undermines the transformative potential of such ideas in staff who are inexperienced or are unclear about the underlying intent of such bodies. For example, when asked about setting up an Advisory Committee, Candice (20/10/2008) responded:

So we have to get it and to be honest we don't know where to begin. We don't know where to begin. I have been asked to say where would I start and I was like I don't know, schools? I don't know, community meetings? That means I must move from Khayelitsha, come to Masiphumelele at seven o'clock at night for the forum meetings, you know those SANCO/ANC things, and I was like you know maybe I will just leave it ((laughs)).

In these projects, the project leaders show that have performed a form of 'organisationally-informed risk assessment' – the institutional demand for an Advisory Committee is smaller than the potential negative impact that might result in pursuing such a demand, on higher priorities. That is to say, they will be penalised more heavily for dropping levels of expenditure and clearing (potential side-effects of the additional time they would have to spend on setting up an Advisory Committee) than they will be for ignoring the demand for them.

Third, it is considered *especially inappropriate* in the case of TMNP because it is an urban park that draws its participants from a wide range of communities across Cape Town and because of a SANParks policy to target communities bordering on the National Parks. The project leaders explained that while they may want to recruit from the larger townships in Cape Town (e.g. Nyanga, Khayelitsha), they had thus far been constrained by SANParks policy which indicates that communities bordering on the park should be the primary beneficiaries of job creation efforts. While this policy may be generally appropriate for rural National Parks, its application in the case of TMNP serves to narrow, or even undermine the potential of the project. Until these more general disconnects between policy and practice are addressed, the transformative potential for such bodies *with regard to disability* will remain unfulfilled.

In conclusion, the process of recruitment is a vital step in targeting marginalised groups such as disabled people. However, the programme and the projects have spent little time and conceptual energy on creating a structured process that is able to recruit *intentionally*. The 'outsourcing' of recruitment to contractors would seem to have further weakened the intentionality of the programme and, as the next section shows, has also impacted on the quality of work offered to these targeted groups.

### 6.3.2. Participation and retention

There are two aspects of participation and retention relevant to this analysis: the first is a general disconnect that has negative implications for disabled participants, while the second addresses disabled participation directly through the notion of 'reasonable accommodation'. First, WfW policy envisages that all participants should receive (limited) employment (in terms of time and compensation), training, mentoring, assorted social development interventions and some form of planned exit into employment or further training. However, as has already been pointed out, the

contractor system has created two tiers of beneficiary. The discussion about training and exiting contractors will be pursued in more detail in the section below. It is sufficient here to note two aspects of the position of contractors in the project. First, their reliability and efficiency forms the bedrock of the effectiveness of the WfW programmes and so their training, mentoring and retention is a core aspect of the project leader's job. Second, they are assisted in setting up and running independent businesses which tender for work from the WfW project. Recruitment, managing the quality of work, payment<sup>72</sup> and selection for training and support are therefore all determined by the contractor. Ultimately, the competence of the contractor in directing the quality and efficiency of the clearing effort *determines* the quality of the work provided by the programme. Candice (20/10/2008) explains this in greater detail:

We have three people that have worked since April and they still haven't been paid. Their sites are the worst, terrible sites you can ever get. So it's like you give someone, and these people have been working for us for more than two years, and they still can't clear right, they still can't do the alien clearing right. What the Park is now saying is as much as the project is poverty relief, we are not compromising when it comes to quality. We need good quality to give them money. Now they don't have money to go on site any more. They don't have petrol money, they don't have this, they're just stories. So it's a big mess that I am sitting with. I've asked to get the sites terminated completely. Just pay them the money and that's it. Because it was a 10-day contract and they've worked how many months, six months on a 10 day contract. So already they are running a loss. How a contractor will pay their people after so many days I have no idea. And now the people have been tracking the contractor. They have been going to his house and saying if you don't give us our money we are going to burn your house down, we are going to do this, they have taken his TV, they have taken, you know. So it's a big mess. We were the unfortunate ones to be experiencing such with three sites, not just one, three sites (Candice, 20/10/2008).

In contrast to the carefully managed relationship between project manager and contractor, these projects experience high levels of worker turnover. All three project leaders attributed this to a perception amongst workers that the programme as a form of temporary, 'casual work':

Another thing that is of personal interest to me is that at the moment working in this project, in the communities, is seen as casual work. You can just come in and out in project teams as you please because there is no stability. A contractor will want a full team every time so if I go to that contractor I know they will take me. So I think the programme itself needs to be really addressed in the communities. It needs to be advertised properly. I think people think it's just alien clearing and get your money, that's it. Whereas this is really a 24 months learnership programme, you get your training, you get your equipment, in the end you get your own business. I don't think that's getting through to the communities and I want that to be there. I want people to know that this is really a huge opportunity and it doesn't seem like it's happening at all (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

As Thandi (01/10/2008) suggests, this undercuts the developmental thrust of the programme. While project leaders have been able to identify this as a problem, their response thus far has largely focused on managing its implications for the success of the programme. Candice (20/10/2008) describes the strategies employed by contractors and workers:

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<sup>72</sup> [And it is completely up to them how they pay their workers then?] We don't get involved in finances too much; it's between them and their bookkeepers and their workers because it's the same principle as, I won't see my most senior boss see my pay slip, even though they probably know what I'm getting paid, because it is that kind of privacy. You want to keep that there (Thandi).

I think it depends on the site and the contract. What normally happens is when the contract, it depends on how they work for starters, people always come for the first few days. So the clever contractors, they will give them the hard work the first few days they come. Then a few days later there is just a tree *there*, and there, and there, and people get demotivated. So now if you work hard there next week; there is nothing to clear, so there is a few trees there and there. 'I have cleared this much so why would I quit now when I have this much to clear?' But for the contractors that start with the easy work then every day they are experiencing problems every day they are employing someone because people leave when it gets to the difficult part everybody leaves, especially if it's up the mountain then 'no it's tiring' and then they leave. They know they are going to get the three days that they worked and that's something. So I always motivate them to start on the hard part first and so when they are tired you are already on the easy side.

[So do you think that most people who work, that's really how they think about it, it's some money to get them by...]

It's bread for that day (Candice, 20/10/2008).

The project leaders suggest that the perception of the programme as 'casual work' is driven by the pay scale imposed by the National EPWP legislation and WfW policy, the fractured nature of the contracts and the splintered social fabric of the target communities. It is worth pointing out that part of this an inherent part of public works programmes – low levels of pay and limited terms of employment are intended to encourage participants to pursue formal, better paid employment. Thandi explains the nature of the failure of this strategy:

We want people to be actually independent and financially free but with the current rate that we pay we basically keeping people in place. It is something that needs to be really addressed. It is a national issue, everybody's got the same Working for Water rates but it's just way too low. It's keeping people in place, even though, you don't want to be a general worker for five years so it forces people to think 'this 24 months I've got that much to do'. So there is two sides to the coin (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

As was noted in the critique of the EPWP, in an environment of structural unemployment such as in South Africa there are very few formal opportunities. It therefore seems plausible that the systemic instability created by these factors unduly functions to undercut the developmental potential of the programme.

### ***Providing reasonable accommodation for disabled people***

The full participation of 'people with disabilities' in the programme may well acquire additional human or technological support. Employment legislation, including the special legislation promulgated to regulate the EPWP, gives disabled participants the legal right to claim such support from the programme in the form of 'reasonable accommodation'. "The aim of the accommodation is to reduce the impact of the impairment of the person's capacity to fulfill the essential functions of a job... effectively removing the barrier to a person being able to perform the job, and to enjoy equal access to the benefits and opportunities of employment" (DoL, 2002). Yeo and Moore (2003:581) explain that providing such support is essential to enable disabled people to freely participate and *genuinely benefit from* the programme:

Individual disabled people may have specific access requirements that need to be met before full participation is possible. When disabled people become involved in an organization which is unprepared to be fully inclusive, misconceptions about disabled



people's lack of abilities can be reinforced. Such token involvement does little to reduce the marginalization experienced by disabled people.

As they indicate, there is also a strong relationship between the conceptualisation of disabled people and the provision of reasonable accommodation. It is not only about making them more effective employees, but is also a *political act* of challenging perceptions and empowerment. However, the notion of reasonable accommodation has little general resonance in WfW. As was pointed out in the previous sub-section, the presumption operating in the document conceptualising disabled people and their role in the programme would seem to be that reasonable accommodation will not be provided. That is, the only reasonable rationale for excluding 'schizophrenics' or people 'blind in both eyes' is the presumption that they will have to operate unassisted. Indeed, the one person with a disability that project leaders could identify as having specific need for support, a deaf person seems to have been left to work it out for himself by using sign language<sup>73</sup>:

What I've seen them doing is that they will translate to the contractor and the contractor ((inaudible)). But he speaks the basic sign language so people can talk to him. Sometimes he'll just try and make an example of what he is trying to say and I think you can look read or something because when you talk to him he looks in your lips and then he replies. [So it's the people on his team that help with the translation?] Mostly the contractor because in cases where maybe it's tea break then they whistle, obviously you can't hear the whistle so they will pinch him and go ((motions drinking)). He's actually one of the best guys in that team I must say. The reason why I know him is because every time I go on site, I think he's actually a supervisor because if we issuing new sites he's always with contractor, we walk around the whole side. So he's actually doing a good job in his team. He is a supervisor, he's always with the contractor going up and down and if I want to talk to the contractor he is always next to the contractor (Candice, 20/10/2008).

Therefore, despite being a member of a group that cannot be accommodated in leadership positions, according to the document, he seemed to possess the kinds of traits that would normally earmark a worker to be considered for promotion to a contractor. It seems likely that if the programme was to provide a translator, this would be a very real possibility.

However, none of the managers was familiar with the term, legislation or any budgetary provision being made to accommodate the potential additional costs. Nonetheless, after explaining the idea to them, all agreed that a budgetary provision could be made to accommodate particular cases. For example:

[So it's that thing, reasonable accommodation is the extra thing you have to give them to help them do the job. So it becomes the responsibility of the employer to provide reasonable accommodation. That's something I've been wondering about in terms of Working for Water because it means that ultimately either the contractor or you in your operational budget would need to pay for those things. Do you think they would be money for that kind of thing?]

Yes, as long as the other person could do the job. We can even do it this way: if Working for Water doesn't want us to have this person who is helping you, assisting you, then we can, instead of employing 12 people we can employing 11 people, 10 people and the other two people will be the translator and the disabled person. But there definitely is

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<sup>73</sup> Again, there is perhaps a cynical argument to be made that as the direct employer, the contractor is responsible for providing this support (as indicated in this case). As I argued below, this would seem to place an 'unjustifiable hardship' on contractors and dramatically deinceivise the inclusion of disabled people. The only practical solution is that the programme makes specific provision in its budget.

room for that, there definitely is budget. I mean I feel there is often a lot of money that is wasted on things that is not really necessary. So I think there is a budget for it.

[In terms of the way you budget and you spend, it is a bit that you tell them what you would like and how you would spend it, justify how, and they either say yes or no?] Yes. [So in this kind of case you could say I want an extra budget for this person.] Yes, and if it makes sense then they will always approve. They are not really thick skulled (Candice, 20/10/2008).

However, the lack of such a provision *before the fact* can establish and perpetuate a negative cycle within the programme: disabled people are not explicitly catered for and therefore are not effectively recruited or included as participants in the programme (and therefore are not explicitly catered for etc). The legislation dealing with reasonable accommodation explicitly recognises this problem and therefore stresses that provision must be made for it at every stage of the employment process:

Reasonable accommodation applies to applicants and employees with disabilities and may be required: (i) during the recruitment and selection processes; (ii) in the working environment; (iii) in the way work is usually done and evaluated and rewarded; and (iv) in the benefits and privileges of employment (DoL, 2002).

However, the legislation suggests that such a demand for accommodation must not create 'unjustifiable hardship' on the business of the employer; that is, "difficulty or expense that would substantially harm the viability of the enterprise. This involves considering the effectiveness of the accommodation and the extent to which it would seriously disrupt the operation of the business" (DoL, 2002). The challenge for project leaders, therefore, is to construct an incentive structure for the recruitment and participation of disabled people in such a way as to limit the 'unjustifiable hardship' placed on individual contractors. However, as Yeo and Moore (2003) point out and as the limitations of the 'accommodation' document illustrate, it also involves the formulation and pursuit of an explicit impact in the lives of disabled participants – inclusion to what end? The final section begins to wrestle with this question.

## **6.4. Overwhelmed by disconnects: shaping the social impacts of the programme?**

This chapter addresses the (intended) developmental impacts of the programme by focusing on its attempt to provide training and exit participants into further opportunities. It shows that there are substantial disconnects between WfW policy with regard to these processes and its practice; driven by many of the forces already outlined (hierarchies of outcomes; emphasis on efficiency; measuring outputs instead of outcomes or impacts). It also argues that the mainstreaming of disability concerns will only be possible when these systems are better established and better able to contribute to meeting the programme's developmental goals.

### **6.4.1. Training**

There are three aspects to training that are particularly pertinent to shaping the impact of the programme: first, how training needs are identified; second, who provides the training; and third, who are the primary beneficiaries of training – contractors or workers. There are two relatively distinct levels or types of training offered by the programme: 'functional' training provides staff with the skills they need to participate safely in the programme; and vocational training or 'sustainable skills' that are transferable to other employment contexts. All participants undergo induction

training (including first aid, health and safety and herbicide application) when they first enter the programme. This basic training is organised by the project and paid for out of the operational budget. Any additional training must be organised through the Department of Labour.

[And then in terms of training, how does that work in your project? Who does the organising and what kinds of...]

Well, when we are doing the APO, the first three months of the APO, March, April, May, we have to plan our essential training. So that training we have to pay for. So that the basic training like first aid level 1, health and safety level 1, herbicide applications course. It's basically you do a refresher or training of new people in teams because, you know, we have high staff turnover. From July, say July of this year until June next year, that is when training is funded by Department of Labour. But that is actually just a big problem because it is so delayed. So that's where we put on more vocational training, so sustainable skills or something else like brick laying, or snake handling, or computer skills or chainsaw handling, or brush cutter. Sustainable skills that they can either use for clearing or for pure interest. What I did this year which turned out to be a huge waste of time is I gave each contractor a list of all the training available and they had to go to the team and say you guys tell me what you want and put it on the list, the amount of people who would ((inaudible)). And it was going to be great. And it was all Department of Labour training and now the Department of Labour has pulled out. But that is how I did it for this year. And then the rest of our training is the social events that I mentioned.

[So in the future do you have any other option besides the Department of Labour?]

I can put it on my operational budget but that is taking money away from alien clearing, that's why it's frowned upon (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

There are therefore three sets of disconnects in the training aspect of the programme that prepares participants for further employment. First, there is a basic tension between skills that are vital for the programme and the provision of more general skills. This is aggravated by the limited number of days of training guaranteed to participants, two days for every month of employment so functional skills are therefore prioritised; the difference in how complicated it is to organise the training; high levels of worker turnover, necessitating frequent 'functional training' sessions and undercutting the programme's ability to train them in a variety of transferable skills; and the pressure project leaders are under to meet other, more highly prioritised targets, such as expenditure, clearing and person days of employment.

The second disconnect relates to the problem of how the transferable skills are identified – either the project leader or the individual participant are asked to identify those skills that will make them more employable. For example, Candice (20/10/2008) illustrates the complexity of enquiring about and inspiring participants to suggest specific forms of training:

My people, they haven't really asked for anything. I said to them listen, 'I want to send you guys to this course, would you be interested?' Then they say, 'courses, yes.' For them they just see themselves in field working, getting money at the end of the day and that's it. Now I have been, this is one of my, when I came here I was saying, 'listen you need to motivate these people. In order to get them to do the right job they need to be motivated, they need to know why they are doing this work.' I got everybody back into the induction. I said, 'you have been with us for three years, you have forgotten what you are supposed to be doing with us.' That's why we are experiencing problems. I said, 'listen, if you do this, I will do this for you.' So we have been having this good relationship so far. Like when I took them for snake handling they were like wow we have never been to snake handling before. We do social days, social trainings, where you can get someone for HIV/AIDS just to discuss social issues with them. So I have done that as well since I've come here. The

HIV and AIDS one, the TB one, and then the snake handling, and then I've said, now who ever is interested must come on "knowing how to use a PC". Because what I have noticed is if they have given their quotations, if they quote you, they do everything on paper, then some things you have to translate back into English and they write it in Xhosa and all of these little things. And if you have to read some of the handwriting you can't really see. So it will be much easier to translate something you can see than something you can't even see. So I'm trying to get them to use, to type things and then from there I can translate. [And is there interest?] Yes, we were having a contractors' meeting earlier on, the first person wanted to be here tomorrow but unfortunately I won't be here. So probably by next week we will start doing that. So we will see how far that takes me.

On the face of it this process of self-selection does not seem like a problematic idea; yet a great deal of the programme's impact is premised on this decision. The potential for contractors or workers to be exited into the formal job market or further education requires a more systematic 'matching' of the training provided to requirements and demands of these institutions. This is not an either/or proposition; workers are ultimately best placed to identify those skills that will best improve their quality of life, but providing them with information about where there are opportunities could make a big difference in informing these decision-making processes.

The challenge of identifying appropriate training takes on to the additional requirements when considering disabled people: first, the identification of training and trainers who are willing and able to accommodate the particular needs of disabled participants. Second, an explicit recognition of potential differences in employment opportunities in particular segments of the job market for disabled and non-disabled participants. That is to say, while construction may be identified as one of the most likely expert opportunities for non-disabled participants, the service industry might be identified as more accommodating to particular kinds of needs. Disabled people will likely require separate and specific consideration from other participants in the programme. Third, visible in the quote above from Candice (20/10/2008), is the lack of clarity between 'training' and 'social development' at the project level. Indeed, as she reveals, project leaders have largely dealt with this by treating social development as a form of training (e.g. the funder-mandated HIV/AIDS awareness programme referred to earlier). Additional 'social development' impact in the community is largely considered to be beyond the practical scope of project leaders.

[In terms of head office, they split out training from social development. They've got to different divisions. Is that something you need to worry about, your team needs to worry about?]

Well, it's supposed to be the SDF, her responsibility, but it is... the word social development has been thrown around a lot but not really implemented as such. Like I said, if you don't have the basics right you can't really feel free to indulge on all of these kind of things. But I would love to know how you can go into a community and make a difference because there is a certain mentality, particularly in Table Mountain [withheld] amongst the people that we have employed that, it's almost as though they have completely no ambition at times. Something as simple as following instructions - if you give someone an instruction you are almost guaranteed not to get a result at all. So you have to keep following up, and it's just the headache of following up, following up, so you are kind of babying them to a certain extent. It causes a lot of problems, a lot of problems over the last couple of months... (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

On being asked if it would be useful to have someone who worries about social development inside the project structures, Candice (20/10/2008) replied that:

Yes, I believe the project manager should be focused on quality of work and the budget. I mean, there are other things that you can partake in but those two things number one.

Ja, the quality of work particularly. If we want to actually get rid of the alien plants, that is something fundamental that we need to be focusing on and it becomes difficult when you spend four days out of your week in your office doing reports. It just defeats the purpose of your project actually.

Managing the social impacts of the programme, then, is regarded as beyond the reach of individual project leaders. As WfW head office intends the inclusion of marginalised groups to fall within the notion of 'social development', lack of clarity would seem to indicate the need for a revision of the structure and functioning at the project level.

Finally, as was identified in the previous section, the differentiation of participants into contractors and workers has resulted in a differentiated impact in terms of levels of training. High rates of turnover amongst the workers and their functional separation from project leaders has meant a very shallow impact in terms of further training. As a group that is more efficiently retained and depended upon, contractors are provided with additional, specific training to prepare them to be small business owners<sup>74</sup> and careful mentoring from project leaders.

[So where do you draw, I mean, where do you get most of your contractors from; especially the new ones?]

Well it's also not as systematic, systemic, organised a system as I suppose would be ideal but typically we either get them from the work force, we look among the workers for potential and then we try and give them chances. Transport is always an issue because they are now going from workers status to now the contractor responsible for all sorts of things and a lot of money which is a huge job. So we are trying to develop them in that but we are careful about the number of people that we give that opportunity too. Not more than two at the time because they require a lot of attention but otherwise guys come to the office, they enquire and you can quickly see if this guy is someone I can give a chance too or is this guy just going for broke, just trying his luck. And sometimes, you definitely make mistakes, we've employed people who just aren't contractors, who just don't give a rip about the workers and you know you learn these things (Sam, 04/10/2008).

Project leaders, therefore, often spoke about the levels of trust developed between themselves and reliable contractors over time. As a result, all three projects admitted to retaining contractors past the twenty-four month limit set by the EPWP legislation:

[That's also what I've heard from other people that once you've found a contractor who knows what they're doing and that you know you can rely on then you don't want to...]

And then I can imagine with the new ones, you train someone, you train them so well, after two years, or if they get successful before then, the project must say you can give another person a chance. You've made it. Go get somewhere else. You know, and you've trained this person, you trust this person, you know this person is going to do exactly what

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<sup>74</sup> [In terms of the contractors, we've spoken about trying to find them, in terms of their development, especially in terms of becoming business people, do they get business training? Or is it just more on-the-job training?] No, they do actually get training. It's not just me telling them this is how you manage your finances. They get business finance training, personal finance training. There is also supposed to be something called contractor development which is a course set up to develop contractors basically. Starting them from scratch saying these are your goals, identifying your goals, where you are going to be in five years time, this is how you are going to get there. [And is that meant to be run, who runs those?] The Department of Labour. The training is funded by The Department of Labour. So it's a bit disappointing that it's not going to happen this year. Unless I can make a plan to make it happen which is what has been suggested (Thandi, 01/10/2008).

you want, then you have to get someone else. You have to start over again, from scratch, training (Candice, 20/10/2008).

The kinds of impacts envisaged by WfW policy, which is related to neoliberal governmentality, is therefore focused on this group. This involves the process of aligning the subjectivities of these individuals with the demands of policy, particularly greater market-related autonomy, and their inclusion in the formal job market. That is, it is this group that are supposed to come to think about themselves as entrepreneurs. However, as the last section will discuss, the kind of trust and negotiation that is the norm between project leaders and contractors often results in a form of mutual dependence – the antithesis of the programmatic intent.

#### **6.4.2. Exiting the programme**

WfW policy envisages that teams of contractors and workers will be able to exit the programme after their allotted twenty-four months and find employment in the private sector working either for land owners or other parts of the government, both of which are compelled by legislation to clear their land of alien vegetation. Unfortunately, this legislation is rarely enforced and so demand has largely remained low<sup>75</sup>. This has resulted in uncertainty about what the most viable exiting strategies are and how to go about preparing contractors for a life after WfW. I happened to do my fieldwork when two of the project leaders were beginning the process of exiting multiple contractors from their programme. This was fortunate as it is a relatively rare experience – all three project leaders reported having contractors who have been working for them for far longer than the twenty-four months allowed by the legislation. For example, Sam (12/08/2008) explained: “So I mean, some of our guys have stayed well over the two years and if someone came out from DWAF and saw, they could nail me like you wouldn't believe. But in terms of the actual objectives for the programme I find it a lot more effective.” As was noted in the previous section, this process is an emotionally charged affair as project leaders have a personal investment in the future success of the contractors with which they have so closely worked. For example, Thandi (01/10/2008) explained the complexity of navigating this terrain with them:

I've known these guys for two years now. You form a very strong bond with your contractors, it's not really an emotional bond, it's professional/emotional, because they confide in you if they got a certain problem – this is the reason why I can't do something. Some of them struggle to speak in the right English. So if they allow themselves to be a bit more vulnerable then they are able to gain your trust and you can help them out or whatever. I know their strengths and weaknesses by now. I know who will actually go forth and expand their businesses and who is actually just going to stick with what they've got. So I'm pretty confident they are all going to make it out on their own.

In contrast, Candice (20/10/2008) admitted to being quite nervous about the prospects for her contractors:

As I am saying, I am very worried about their success. Now that they know they will be exited, they've been here but three years, which they are not supposed to be, only now they are pulling their socks. They are only pulling their socks with the project for starters,

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<sup>75</sup> The City of Cape Town, however, represents somewhat of an exception insofar as it employs teams to clear fire-breaks etc. I heard contradictory opinions about the potential of this demand for providing exit opportunities. Candice enthusiastically told me at length about two contractors who have managed to exit the programme and work for a range of institutions including the City of Cape Town and SANParks. However, conversations with contractors in the programme suggested that the City preferred male dominated teams with professional, expensive clearing equipment.

not even with their own company, with the project. So for the past two years there has been training, training every day. You couldn't, apparently, give them a task and say just do this and they would be able to do this. You would have to mentor them in doing it. I mean for two years. They are not really business minded. Well there is one who has got his own shop and taxis and all of those things so hopefully he might be able to survive because I mean he's running his taxis in Wynberg to Hout Bay. But the others, I don't think they are going to be able to get a job somewhere else.

Later in the interview she very evocatively described their reaction to the news that they will be exited and her frustration with their response:

[In terms of the contractors being exited and moving on, have they asked any specific questions about it? So like training or other places to work or...]

They just said to me a few months ago, 'hey, we heard we are going to get fired now [Candice]. Yes, we are going to get fired now [Candice]. Where are we going to get money now [Candice]? Where are we going to get money now [Candice]? Tell us [Candice]. Give us more work, give us more work. So that we can at least work now and at least keep money until we get another job somewhere else. But they never look at the bigger picture to say, 'okay, [Candice], this is me exiting. What are the chances of me getting a job somewhere else?' They don't ask that question. They just say give me more, give me more work so I can get money. So they don't ask.

In terms of the core *raison d'être* of EPWP (and to a lesser degree WfW) policy, these projects are a complete failure – the emergence of an *homo economis* freed from any dependence on the state or the second economy. However, it should be emphasised that it is failing on its own terms; within the more modest precepts of a conventional Public Works Programme this would be considered far less problematic. This, perhaps, would seem to indicate the propositional and, ultimately, politically tenuous process of spreading neoliberalism – supplanting social value with economic value is a fraught process that inspires contestation and resistance (even if it is in the form of 'hidden' resistance described by Scott in his work, 1990). It also illustrates the danger of pursuing a supply-side intervention without its conceptualisation within a wider development strategy.

## 6.5. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined two forms of disconnect created by the translation of WfW policy into practice. First, it has reviewed the way in which institutional practices and instruments favour particular aspects of the discourse coalitions that have formulated WfW policy – in this case resulting in an emphasis on meeting environmental and financial targets at the cost of any real recognition of the challenges involved in the inclusion of disabled people. It has focused on how an emphasis on expenditure has served to marginalise the social, and particularly the developmental, aspects of the programme. For example, it has shown that project managers have become so preoccupied by demonstrating their performance, their successful tackling of budgets, that the social imperatives of the programme - providing employment for disabled participants, in this case - are lost.

Second, focusing on two aspects of its intended social impact, the chapter has given a series of examples of the disconnects created as WfW policy about general practice and disability mainstreaming is translated into modes of practice and specific instruments. These disconnects illustrate the complexity of translating a centrally-determined policy thrust into specific, contextually-appropriate initiatives and decisions. For example, WfW has set specific targets with regard to disability, providing little guidance about implementation; so SANParks has produced a document, a technical artefact that concretises this demand. Unfortunately, this process has

resulted in an extremely regressive definition of disability *and*, in spite of its formulation, the goal remains un-implementable. It does not manage to achieve the technical task SANParks requires of it *and* it reduces the diversity of disability.

The final form that practice takes is a complex mixture of elements of the discourses that shape the policy environment, and their expression in centralised systems of accountability, in interaction with the particular demands of the decision-makers and participants 'on the ground'. In the face of a cacophony of different discourses, the demands to spend their budget, and a constellation of other dynamics with participants, the definition and operationalisation of disability in SANParks breaks down in practice. It reveals the true complexity of mainstreaming such a concern in a large, dynamic and bureaucratic system. The inclusion of disability targets creates the *possibility* for individual project leaders and community members to innovate new ways to conceptualise and include this group in their practice. However, the current 'balance of forces' in these SANParks projects has resulted in the marginalisation of this inclusionary target and would seem to indicate that a substantial shift in the status quo is required before disabled people will be able to be included *and* experience the developmental benefits of the programme.

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## 7. Conclusion

This conclusion will consolidate and discuss the findings of the analytical and empirical journey traced by this research, paying particular attention to the impact that neoliberalism has had on the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) and Working for Water (WfW), the Janus-faced nature of ambiguity in policy, especially when disability mainstreaming is considered, and the prospects for successful disability mainstreaming in WfW in the future. It then highlights some of the more general lessons and conundrums that can be drawn from this research about successfully mainstreaming disability in governmental programmes. Finally, it suggests possible areas for future research, focusing on the impact of the programme on disabled people and a wider investigation into the mainstreaming of disability in other EPWP programmes.

### 7.1. Consolidating and discussing the findings

This research undertook to trace the 'life of policy' from its transformative intention, the inclusion of disabled people in mainstream development efforts, to its translation into technocratic policies, systems and institutions in WfW and its implementation 'on the ground', in this case in the practice of the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) WfW/SANParks projects. Before addressing the empirical and analytical findings, I think it is important to assert the value that an argumentative or discursive analysis can contribute to understanding processes of governance, and suggests quasi-causal linkages between dynamics that remain invisible to purely positivist or analytical-technical investigations. A post-positivist approach, which takes seriously the influences and impact of discourse in the life of policy, institutions and practice such as the one proposed by Fischer (2003), opens new aspects of policies, organisations and practices up to review and debate.

Programmes, policies and practices are all underpinned by rationalities that bring particular problems to light, while obscuring others, and contain within their framing, solutions and suggested courses of action. WfW has become subsumed within a wider discursive and institutional shift that began with Mbeki's second term, the first/second economy discourse and EPWP, and yet the defining rationalities, neoliberalism and social transformation have been consistent since the programme's beginnings. The influence of these rationalities is visible in the complexity and diversity of the social aspects of the programme. The most visible 'structuring' effect of these discourses, however, is the differentiated way neoliberalism has brought about 'hierarchies of practice' in both at WfW and SANParks. Interestingly, it is 'expressed' in diametrically opposite ways, based on institutional context and positioning: the underpinning political rationality required WfW to focus on training and the creation of exit opportunities, in line with the overarching first/second economy discourse. In contrast, SANParks staff experienced neoliberalism in the form of new public management, which incentivised the pursuit of easily measurable/achievable metrics (e.g. 'person days' of work) over the more complex and time-consuming targets like training. The common element is that *both* of these 'expressions' have served to marginalise disability within the programme – disability resists the market-driven rationalities that underpin these hierarchies and so has been left largely underdeveloped.

The first/second discourse, the EPWP and WfW have shown the importance of ambiguity in creating the conditions for 'bureaucratic entrepreneurship'. The political success of these programmes (and discourses) has been due to their ability to articulate neoliberal rationalities with progressive discourses in order to build broad discourse coalitions around these programmes. As WfW has been able to show successfully, ambiguity can serve to bring diverse stakeholders together in partnerships, and the flexibility ambiguity offers can encourage innovation. However, as Matland (2005) cautions with his ambiguity-conflict model, ambiguity, when only directed by an

underdeveloped 'referential goal', may adversely affect the practice of the organisation. The differences in focus and momentum between the environmental and social aspects of WfW underline this point (illustrated in both the WfW and SANParks chapters). The environmental rationalities of the programme are able to sustain a discourse coalition focused on achieving specific wider ecosystem outcomes – staff are able and willing to innovate and collaborate to achieve common aims (reinforced by a strong system of technologies and policy tools). In contrast, the social aspects of the programme have encouraged innovation but this has led to a fracturing and proliferation of policy goals (and 'tools' to support their implementation largely remain underdeveloped).

Disability is perhaps the purist expression of these different outcomes of ambiguity. This is because its articulation into the 'differentiated unity' that makes up WfW has occurred at a higher level of abstraction – it is a policy goal that is made rational by the confluence of wider governmental discourses but, within the context of the programme, it largely remains an 'empty signifier'. This, however, is not unique to WfW. The varied and diverged definitions of disability and its awkward positioning between social security and development policy illustrate its ambiguous place within governmental discourse. Governmentality demands precisely those processes (e.g. enumeration, standardisation etc) which the notion of disability destabilises. The nebulous and relational nature of this social category requires a flexibility and patience that are an anathema to the demands of political and bureaucratic systems, particularly those under the pressure of neoliberalism.

Considered as a whole, how does WfW understand and respond to its failure to meet its disability targets? Echoing the 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to implementation studies, there are two different narratives visible in WfW (and SANParks). One narrative suggests that the flexibility of the programme enables the innovation required at the local level to achieve the core intents of the programme. Capacitated, confident project leaders are able to adapt the 'complex unity' of the programme to local conditions and pressures. Any failure to meet its disability targets simply requires exposure to some wider conceptual tools, and a more pragmatic and systematic system of organisational learning (Matland, 1995). The other seeks greater control over the local: the complexity of practice, and foreign nature of disability, means that explicit systems of accountability and concrete tools (e.g. the SANParks disability information sheet) are required to make sure it is 'mainstreamed'. Failure demands a reduction in complexity and ambiguity by building more systematic and directive tools of accountability. While both of these undoubtedly contain elements of truth, they tend either to negate one another (resulting in organisational paralysis around the issue) or, as was the case in the SANParks examples, the scaffolding of each is constructed, but without clear organisational momentum in either direction. This results in decision-makers on the ground having to navigate and negotiate contradictory discourses and signals. Part of the problem, as implementation studies points out (e.g. Winter, 2003; O'Toole, 2004), is that there are some essential paradigmatic differences between these approaches that cannot be reconciled.

However, as this thesis has argued, the failure to achieve its more transformative objectives is deeply connected to the continued dominance of the neoliberal governmentalities that frame its practice. These signal the 'logical' limits of those working in both the political and technocratic spheres in government. Yet this rationality, and its expression in discourses, has always been articulated with more progressive discourses (and rationalities). This accounts for the examples of success that have occurred in specific, scattered projects across WfW – individual project managers who are able to mobilise these more latent elements of overarching discourses (a reorganisation of the 'chains of equivalence' to use Laclau's phrase) to achieve transformative outcomes.

In addition to these two ideas, there is a need to recognise and account for the effect that the rationalities of rule have on the possibilities for practice. This suggests that an integral part of

mainstreaming will require the kind of participatory policy analysis envisaged by Fischer in his description of 'political consensus formation' (quoted in Chapter 2). It is possible to extract a few propositional lessons about disability mainstreaming, recalling Fischer's (2003:198) claim that such processes "involve conjecture and speculation, analogy, and metaphor, and logical extrapolation from established causal relationships and facts", and these are outlined below.

## 7.2. Teasing out the implications: improving the mainstreaming of disability

"...disabled people aren't like everyone else. They *are* everyone else."

(Anonymous, 1994; in Siedle, 1996: vii)

This quotation captures perfectly the simple truth that lies at the heart of the complexity of disability mainstreaming. It illustrates two basic, overarching stages that a policy, program or institution must be able to conceptualise and pragmatically address. The first is the deceptively simple act of recognising that this 'category' of person will require an adjustment or even reconceptualisation of existing processes and spaces that few other categories would require. The second, following hot on the heels of the first, is that this 'category' lacks 'positive content'; that is, it is defined by what it is not. The adjustments required cannot be known in advance because the nature of the needs and barriers are almost completely contextually dependent. This speaks to those elements of government that are weakest – it requires the expression of the 'will to govern' through technologies that self-reflexively convey the intent, the underpinning logic or rationality, and flexible, practical tools to local decision-makers who are then empowered to take contextually-relevant action.

As the literature and this research has suggested, ambiguities are frequently the lifeblood that brings policy into being. Yet ambiguity is useful (in terms of the 'will to rule') only in so far as individual actors are able to fill signifiers with positive, actionable content – 'the environment' means different things to different people but the multitude of meanings are undoubtedly positive. Disability, as it exists in our collective 'common sense' and the dominant welfarist/medical discourses in society, does not have this discursive potential (Handley, 2003). This is at the heart of the struggle to advance transformative goals through policy-making – the provision of positive discursive resources. The mainstreaming of disabled people in development efforts *should* trigger a 'why' question (because it challenges the basic conception of disabled people as unable) but *must* then provide an answer for decision-makers and participants. They must know *who* they are addressing and *why*.

The SANParks case illustrates the complexity of this challenge – a bureaucratic system requires targets that are tied to performance indicators in order for them to be prioritised and yet, as has been discussed, the act of 'fixing' these targets has the tendency of undercutting dynamic, relational conceptualisations of disability and can lead to a narrow, 'compliance' approach to implementation. If we consider governmentality to be the "linkages between questions of government, authority and politics, and questions of identity, self and person" (Dean, 1999: 13) then the first part of a mainstreaming effort may well have as its target the decision-makers within the programme. This stretches beyond the identification of mainstreaming 'champions' and the provision of training (all mainstays in conventional mainstreaming efforts) to a reconceptualisation of systems of accountability and learning in order to achieve a congruence between these disciplinary technologies and the subjectivities of decision-makers.

For example, systems of reporting, rather than emphasising compliance and chasing numerical targets, could encourage the reflection on the underpinning values and rationalities in order to assess the *value* of the outcomes achieved by the programme. In Fischer's (2003) framework this involves moving the reporting system from a technical-analytical discourse to situational, or even societal, discourse. This may indeed be a tall ask for bureaucratic, governmental systems, and yet it is difficult to envisage successful mainstreaming efforts that do not include this level of reflexivity and flexibility.

### **7.3. Future research**

As was noted in the methods chapter, a disappointment in and limitation of this research has been its inability to investigate the effect of policy on disabled participants – taking instead the processes and tools (including discourses) available to government decision-makers as its focus of research and analysis. An important area for future investigation, therefore, is detailed ethnographic research on the experiences of disabled people as they participate in such a project and what impact, if any, it has on their lives, conceptions of self and their position within their social networks. Do they experience becoming a wage earner as empowering? Do their experiences in such a physically demanding programme disrupt or reinforce previously held ideas about their capacity and 'employability'? How have their experiences as wage earners shifted their social position within their family, neighbourhood, social circles etc? How has their inclusion in project teams shifted the practice of the organisation and the perception of their fellow 'able' workers? It is in the answers to these questions than the true successes, failures and costs of mainstreaming will become visible.

At the time of writing, the Extended Public Works Programme retains its pride of place as the leading poverty alleviation/unemployment-addressing programme in South Africa. A range of findings from this research are suggestive of the kinds of issues that may arise elsewhere in the programme, underpinned as they are by the same rationalities of rule. Research into how systemic (i.e. widespread) these problems with mainstreaming are in the EPWP is essential in order to assess the need for a more general reconceptualisation of the inclusion of disabled people in these programmes. A wide scale survey focusing on the preparedness of project leaders to mainstream disabled people in each of the project processes identified in Chapter 6 (identification, recruitment, participation, retention, training, and exiting) may be sufficient for an initial overview, while a number of in-depth case studies may well be required to identify programme, project and context specific issues that impact on the mainstreaming of disabled people.

### **7.4. Bringing the process to a conclusion**

Creating opportunities for disabled people to participate in all aspects of society is an indispensable part of any development or social justice agenda. This undoubtedly involves the transfer of resources and the provision of training but these outcomes cannot be pursued without the conscious and explicit connection of these processes to the wider processes of social change required to genuinely mainstream disabled people in society. While this is not the case at the moment, the mainstreaming of disabled people in government programmes presents an opportunity to challenge and confound expectations and presumptions about the capacity and value of disabled people. The design and implementation processes of disability mainstreaming, therefore, require an explicit foregrounding of transformative discourses; a difficult prospect in a governmental system that remains largely underpinned by neoliberal rationalities. This research has shown that the ambiguity that facilitates processes of policy formulation and institutionalisation can have deleterious effects when it comes to pursuing targets that remain 'empty signifiers' – such as those

for disabled people. The mainstreaming of disability in programmes such as WfW, therefore, requires the reconceptualisation of the way in which systems of accountability and learning operate in government. These systems need to facilitate flexible processes that enable project staff and participants to critically engage with the conditions and processes that make up the development enterprise. Taking the mainstreaming of disability seriously, then, creates an opportunity to improve the effectiveness and depth of development projects more generally.

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